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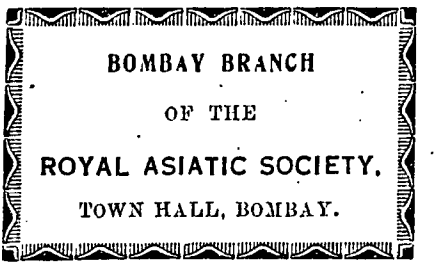

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LIVES

OF

GREEK STATESMEN

SECOND SERIES

EPHIALTES—HERMOKRATES

BY THE

REV. SIR GEORGE W. COX, BART., M.A.

AUTHOR OF 'MYTHOLOGY OF THE ARYAN NATIONS' ETC.

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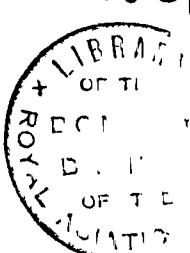

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PREFACE

THE lives given in the first volume of this series were presented to the reader as a picture of the Greek world down to the close of the struggle with Persia. I undertook in the present volume to deal with the statesmen whose lives belong, for the most part, to the period of the fatal struggle between Athens and Sparta. I have, however, been obliged to confine myself to the lives of those statesmen whose political activity belongs almost wholly to the time preceding the catastrophe of the Athenian armament at Syracuse. The third volume will cover a larger period.

The present series cannot, I think, fail to put clearly before the reader the essential difference between the polity of Athens and that of Sparta, and so to account for the vast contrast between the characters of Spartan and Athenian statesmen. This contrast is full not only of interest, but of instruction for all who may be called upon to take part in the political life of the present day; and the value of the lesson may, perhaps, be best measured by a careful comparison of the career of Perikles with that of Brasidas.

For the life of the great Athenian statesman, it was

necessary to submit to a closer scrutiny the account of the attack on Plataia by the Thebans, as related by Thucydides; and the story of this attack cannot be separated from that of the siege and destruction of this city. In my examination of this narrative I have already expressed my obligations to Dr. F. A. Paley. For the further results set forth in the present volume I gladly acknowledge my debt to the very searching criticism of Dr. H. Müller-Strübing in the 'Year-Book of Classical Philology' for 1885.

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Errata.

Page 52, in margin, for *Athenian and Corinthian Greeks* read *Ionian and Dorian Greeks.*

Page 86, in margin, for *Special* read *Epical.*

LIVES

OF

GREEK STATESMEN

EPHIALTES

ALTHOUGH we cannot pretend to know much of the personal history of Ephialtes, yet, as the leader not less than the colleague of Perikles, he comes before us with a character as strongly marked as that of any statesman who had risen to eminence in Athens or in any other Greek city. The greatness of Athens in the brilliant period which preceded the fatal struggle between the Dorian and Ionian Greeks was in a large measure due to him. Some, it is true, in his own or in a later day, were pleased to assert that Ephialtes was little more than a convenient instrument in the hands of Perikles for the doing of work in which that illustrious man did not care to be personally prominent. But this statement is probably not more trustworthy than the calumny rejected by Plutarch that the death of Ephialtes was due directly to the jealousy of Perikles, who thus requited him for his faithfulness and zeal.

Character and work of Ephialtes

It matters little whether his father's name was Sophonides or, as Diodoros gives it, Simonides. Tradition gives us some hints of the share which Neokles had in the education of his son Themistokles (vol. i. p. 130): of the father of Ephialtes even this faint picture is lacking.

The purpose of his life

But it is certain that from the first Ephialtes set before himself one single purpose in life, and this aim was to develop to the utmost those elements of strength in the Athenian people which had shattered the power of the Persian king, and made Athens an imperial city.

Feelings of Ephialtes towards Sparta

It is in a high degree likely that, in undertaking this work, he felt sure from the first that he could have no support from any Dorian State. He may have been aware that the rise of Athens to empire must arouse the jealousy and hatred especially of Sparta, and he may therefore have regarded the misfortunes of the latter as incidents by no means to be regretted. If after the revolt of the Helots which followed the earthquake at Sparta, B.C. 464, Ephialtes contended that it was not the business of Athenians to rescue her from her difficulties, and that they should rather leave her in the ditch into which she had stumbled, he was giving utterance probably to the real feeling of his heart. But so also was Kimon, who, when the Spartans came to ask for help, is said to have besought his countrymen not to suffer Hellas to be lamed or Athens to be left without its yokefellow. The issue showed that Kimon was wrong and Ephialtes right. The ideal of the polity by which Kleisthenes and Themistokles had been shaping the constitution of Athens was utterly opposed to all the principles which lay at the root of the Dorian society of Sparta; and if it was for the good of the world that Athens should achieve the supremacy which, through the hands of the Makedonian kings, passed in the end to Rome, then the humiliation of Sparta was a thing rather to be desired than mourned.

Spirit of Athenian polity

This is a question which it is perhaps impossible for us to answer. He must be a bold, if not a rash, man who will venture to say that all things happen for the best, although all things may work together for good to those who sincerely desire the victory of right over wrong. But it is at least clear that Athens was seeking to establish a system under which all Hellas might retain

the practical independence of the individual citizen as completely as it is retained in every portion of the British Empire, and that Sparta, instinctively dreading the establishment of such a polity, set herself deliberately to crush it.

That this catastrophe would come within the lifetime of some who were then already born was a thought which could not enter the mind of Ephialtes or of the statesmen who worked with him. Hence, with full confidence and hope, Ephialtes set himself to further the cause of the party of progress, while the conservative statesmen, headed by Kimon, were anxious to keep things as they were. There was enough in the present condition of the Athenian constitution to encourage the latter in the thought that the aristocratical privileges thus far maintained might be made the means for recovering others which had been lost. The reforms of Kleisthenes had left the main body of Athenian citizens, the members of the Thetic or fourth class (i. 17), ineligible for the archonship. By the generous zeal of Aristeides this restriction had been withdrawn (i. 124); but men who are eligible to an office are not therefore always or commonly elected, and something more was needed to give efficacy to this concession.

The Thetic class and the archonship.

Meanwhile the substitution of the new local for the old Eupatrid tribes had so increased the number of Athenian citizens as to detract largely from the august sanctity of the court and council of Areiopagos. Of this venerable body men were now members who never could have been members of it in the days of Solon, and it was found that citizens whose veins lacked the ancient Eupatrid blood were as capable of discharging its functions as any of those who regarded political power as their own exclusive and inalienable birthright.

The court and council of Areiopagos

There were other evils which called not less loudly for reform. The members of the council of Areiopagos held office for life, and they were not therefore accountable to the people like the magistrates, who were elected only for a single year. But it was felt that even the latter should be subjected

to stronger checks than any which had been yet applied. They were, indeed, called to account at the end of their term; but so long as they continued in office they exercised an indefinite judicial power, from which there was no appeal. Cases of disobedience to the authority of the archons and of the strategoi, or generals, were dealt with by those officers respectively, while the court of Areiopagos exercised further a vague censorial authority over the citizens, quite apart from their strictly defined religious jurisdiction in cases of murder or manslaying. Possessed also of the privilege of preserving order in the debates of the Ekklesia (i. 66), it virtually superseded the Probouleutic, or initiative, council of Solon, represented afterwards by the Council of Five Hundred instituted by Kleisthenes. It was no difficult matter probably to rule inconvenient questions to be out of order, and thus the Areiopagos had in its hands substantially the determination of the subjects to be discussed. The Areiopagos, therefore, still remained distinctly a monument of the old Eupatrid ascendency, which limited political power strictly to the members of the ancient religious tribes. To men like Isagoras (i. 62), Aristeides, and Kimon it was a tower of strength, without which they could not hope to encounter their opponents to any purpose; and Æschylos, crowned with the glory of his exploits at Marathon and Salamis, threw the whole influence of his dramatic genius on the side of the venerable court which, as he asserted, the virgin goddess herself intended to last throughout all ages. He thus placed the contention distinctly on a religious ground. The Areiopagos owed its institution to Athênê: to invade its privileges and curtail its powers was to impugn the majesty of the guardian of Athens, and to leave the city a prey to the avenging Furies, whom she had pacified when Orestes stood at its bar.

Rights and privileges of Areiopagos

Ephialtes, however, either could or would have no distinction between the objections urged against the working of the court or council of Areiopagos and any other matters in

the State which called for amendment or suppression. To him and to his colleague Perikles it appeared that there were many abuses which must be assailed at their root. To attempt to redress individual cases of wrong was mere waste of time. The discretionary powers of all public officers must be swept away; and the Areiopagos, whatever might be the decision arrived at with reference to its functions in cases of murder, must be deprived of its censorial privileges and of its right of interference in the conduct of business brought before the public assembly of the citizens. The people must, in short, become the final judges in all criminal as well as civil causes, and to their tribunal all must have the right of appeal.

The discretionary powers of magistrates

For the accomplishment of such reforms as these, Ephialtes was as pre-eminently fitted as Aristeides. Both, it seems, were poor, the stories of their wealth being probably the growth of a later time. Both, as inaccessible to money bribes, stood on a level above that of Themistokles; and we may safely conclude that, when Ephialtes had formulated the changes which he wished to bring about, he set to work determinately to carry out his purpose.

Personal integrity of Ephialtes

The result was a sweeping away of almost the last traces of the old religious ascendency of the Eupatrids. But the blow, it would seem, was struck rather at the council than at the court of Areiopagos. As a judicial tribunal, the court dealt with cases of manslaying; and this power, although some have called the fact into question, it apparently retained. Indeed, it is not easy to see what the reforming party would gain by assailing a jurisdiction against which, thus far, no complaint had been brought. Virulence of political feeling had not yet shown itself by resorting to assassination, although in his death Ephialtes himself was to furnish an illustration of the lengths to which the adherents of the old religious constitution were prepared to go. It was more needful that the people should protect themselves against the undefined pre-

Restriction of the powers of the Areiopagos

rogatives of the council. The claim to interfere in the conduct and education of the citizens might involve greater danger and inconvenience than the chance of an unjust judgment in a case of homicide, while charges of impiety, which might easily be brought against popular statesmen, would constitute a still more formidable danger.

The measures needed to guard against these dangers would fully explain the language in which Plutarch tells us that Ephialtes deprived the council of Areiopagos of almost all its judicial functions, and by so doing set up an unmixed democracy and made the people drunk with liberty or licence. The fact is that the reforms of Kleisthenes, coming upon those of Solon, were now having an effect much like that of patching new cloth on an old garment. A complicated machinery had been devised for insuring the freedom of the main body of the citizens and the due administration of justice, and thus far this machinery had been put to no adequate use. The time was come when it must be either made effective or abandoned; and for the latter course no arguments or inducements were forthcoming.

Ephialtes and the demos

It was indispensably necessary that final jurisdiction in all criminal as well as civil cases should rest with the people; and the means for attaining this end were amply provided by the Heliaia, with its Dikasteries, as formally constituted by Kleisthenes (i. 66). All that was now needed was to make these decuries, each of which represented and had the full authority of the people, permanent courts, and to assign a regular payment to the members for every day spent in their service. The Areiopagos was left simply with its jurisdiction in cases of murder and manslaughter.

The Heliaia and the Dikasteries

The archons retained merely the power of inflicting a small fine, and their chief task was that of managing the preliminary business of cases to be brought before the Heliaia or its decuries. The reform of Aristeides had thrown the archonship open to the citizens of the

The archons and the lot

lowest class. To make sure that lack of wealth or station should be no bar to their election, the plain course was to make election to that office dependent on the lot. That the Areiopagos, filled with archons thus chosen, should become an assembly of average Athenian citizens was a necessary consequence, and with this change the old times when political power was confined to the members of the religious tribes of Eupatrids passed virtually away.

The work of Ephialtes was finished; and his success roused in the minds of his opponents a feeling of indignation more intense probably than any which had been awakened in them before. In the case of Themistokles the oligarchic faction (for so, as resorting to such methods, they must be termed) had done all that they could do by persecution and obloquy. They had driven him from Athens, and, in an age which had no written literature, they had had the power of determining the form which the tradition of his life, when reduced to writing, should take. This power they had sedulously and mercilessly used, and the result was the amazing romance which the Eupatrids put together as a true account of the last years of Themistokles. They had ample time to spin their web of fiction; and when Thucydides applied himself to his great task, their calumnies had assumed a coherence which deceived even his keen insight. But, impartial though Thucydides was, his sympathies never went with the statesmen who had devoted themselves to the cause of the Athenian people, and in his pages the name of Ephialtes nowhere appears.

Fierce hatred of Ephialtes by his opponents

The enemies of this fearless reformer had to work under different conditions. The prospect of getting rid of him by ostracism must, we cannot doubt, have seemed to them hopeless. The popular temper had been sufficiently expressed only a few months before by the ostracism of Kimon. They could bring against Ephialtes no definite charge of impiety or treason. The only alternative lay in murder; and to this alternative they were not

Murder of Ephialtes, B.C. 456

ashamed to resort. Ephialtes was struck down by an assassin hired, if Aristotle, according to a statement preserved to us by Plutarch, was rightly informed, from the Boiotian town of Tanagra, B.C. 456. Like the murder of Kimon, the father of Miltiades (i. 45), the crime was committed at night, and, according to some versions of the story, the perpetrators were never discovered. Whether the assassin received the name of Aristodikos (as Aristotle calls him), as having done a deed of righteous vengeance, we cannot say. The fact, if it be such, would be not more strange than that an eminent runner should, as sparing horses, be called Pheidippides (a name which he could scarcely have borne in his cradle), or that a man whose one recorded act is that of reminding a friend of his duty should be named Mnesiphilos (i. 161). But it is something to know that Kimon *had nothing to* do with the crime, and all that we hear of him in the sequel justifies the belief that he regarded it with abhorrence.

Highest growth of the Athenian constitution

With the changes effected by Ephialtes the growth of the Athenian constitution was completed. The generations which followed could witness only its preservation or its decay. In the issue, the oligarchic spirit, strengthened by the success of Sparta in the struggle with Athens, proved too strong for the more generous polity of Kleisthenes and his successors. It was the happiness of Ephialtes to know Athens in the zenith of her glory, and to leave the scene of his achievements almost before the first signs were seen of the deadly quarrel which rapidly led to the great catastrophe.

KIMON

By birth, training, and temper Kimon, the son of the victor of Marathon, was an Eupatrid. Without dreaming for a moment of subverting by violence a constitution which he disliked, he looked back to the old times with admiration and regret, and seized every opportunity of strengthening the party of which he was proud to be a member. His good fortune called him to serve his country chiefly as a soldier; but with his military prowess he combined something of the skill of a statesman, and Athens owed him no slight debt for the judicious method which he adopted in dealing with the incipient treasons of the Spartan Pausanias.

Kimon a staunch Eupatrid

Plutarch at least bestows sufficient praise on his statesmanlike qualities and his military greatness. Quoting the lines in which the comic poet Eupolis speaks of his careless disposition and convivial habits, he remarks that, if with these foibles he rose to such eminence, he must, if he had been free from them, have attained a renown beyond that of any Greek of his own or any other age. The character of Kimon was, in truth, one which could not fail to make a strong impression on the mind of his biographer. He belonged to the party which held aloof from the advanced democratical views and aims of Ephialtes, and for these views and aims Plutarch could have no great sympathy. The brilliant hopes which stirred the heart of Ephialtes and his colleagues had long since faded away; and if Plutarch had any definite thoughts on the imperial great-

Estimate of Kimon by Plutarch

ness of Athens he must have looked back upon it as a strange and troubled dream which could teach no political lessons to subjects of the Roman Cæsar.

Aims and policy of Kimon

But if Kimon looked on Themistokles and his followers as men whose policy was full of risks for Athens, he never allowed his admiration for the Spartan mode of life and government to check his devotion to the interests of his country, as these presented themselves to a mind neither very profound nor very well disciplined. The Persian despot had been driven away from Hellas; but it could scarcely be said that he had been driven out of Europe. In Asiatic waters the great king might still look on himself as supreme, while he had in Lesser Asia a military base from which he might advance again to the recovery of all that he had lost. In order to put the final stroke to the work begun at Salamis, Plataia, and Mykalê, there was therefore much to be done still, and to this task Kimon gave himself with his whole heart.

His parentage and early years

The courage and ability with which he set about it brought him not merely a reputation even beyond that which he might have looked for, but wealth surpassing his brightest daydreams. His career opened with prospects sufficiently gloomy. His father had been condemned to a fine which he could not pay, and which it seemed impossible for his son to discharge; and dark shadows, possibly of his own causing, boded ill for his future fortunes. His relations with Elpinike, the daughter of his father, are said, according to one tradition noticed by Plutarch, to have brought upon him the gravest of charges. Kimon's mother was Hegesipyle, the daughter of Oloros, a Thrakian chief, whose alliance was a matter of great moment to Miltiades at the outset of his enterprise in the Chersonesos (i. 49, 94). Elpinike, it would seem, was the daughter of Miltiades by another marriage, and therefore by Athenian law Kimon might make her his wife.

This marriage, as others related, actually took place; but in this case a divorce must have preceded her union with

Kallias, a wealthy Athenian, who on condition of receiving her as his wife agreed to pay the fine imposed on Miltiades. Elpinike thus became the means of extricating Kimon from his immediate difficulties, and she seems to have aided him effectually in other troubles later on.

Kimon and Elpinike

Kimon's Thrakian associations may have had something to do with his aristocratic leanings, just as the same cause may have influenced the political sympathies of his kinsman, the historian Thucydides. That there was a connexion by blood between Kimon and the historian we may safely admit. Apart from this, we find ourselves among rumours and guesses. Thucydides speaks of himself as a son of Oloros, and this Oloros seems to have been a son of Hegesipyle, the mother of Kimon, by a second marriage after the death of Miltiades. He was, therefore, a son of Kimon's half-brother, who may have inherited the power of Oloros, the father-in-law of the victor of Marathon. If this second Oloros, the father of the historian, also married a woman named Hegesipyle, the fact seems to point to a poverty of names among the families of Thrakian chieftains.

Kimon and the historian Thucydides

Kimon was probably not far short of five-and-twenty years of age when Thucydides was born. In his history the latter mentions the chief incidents in Kimon's life; but he does so only in the brief sketch of events preceding the great struggle between Athens and Sparta. His remarks sufficiently show the importance of Kimon's military career, but they give us no picture of the man as it has been drawn for us by Plutarch with no great discrimination from the statements of later writers. Thus he relates as fact, without any expression of misgiving, the rivalry of Themistokles with Kimon at Olympia, the reckless extravagance noted in both being regarded as little to the credit of Themistokles, while it seems to have been in no way out of place in the Eupatrid youth whom he sought to leave in the shade. Not much more significant, though

Anecdotes of his early years

probably more credible, is the anecdote that, when Themistokles had obtained the consent of the people for the abandonment of Athens to the hosts of Xerxes, Kimon was among the first to be seen hurrying to the Acropolis with a bridle in his hand, and there devoting it to the goddess as no longer needed by himself. The sight of the young man, in the full bloom of his youth, with his great stature and the abundance of his thick curly locks pointing to the vigour of an athlete, was one which must delight Athenian lookers-on; and we may well suppose that their courage was quickened by the resolution with which Kimon, eager for immediate departure, hurried to the seashore.

Kimon and Pausanias

The victories of Plataia and Mykalê (i. 121, 166) led to events in which Kimon found opportunities of rising to real distinction. His rapid advancement was due in no small measure to the influence of Aristeides, whose colleague he became in the command of the Athenian forces sent to put the finishing strokes to the war under the supreme authority of the Spartan Pausanias. The considerate moderation and the unimpeachable integrity of the Athenian generals soon stood out in striking contrast with the absurd arrogance and wretched treasons of the Spartan leader. Pausanias was recalled; but before the order reached him the Asiatic Greeks had requested Aristeides and Kimon to receive them into direct alliance with Athens, and the passive resistance shown by them to Dorkis and his fellow-commissioners was virtually the establishment of Athenian supremacy by sea, if not on land (i. 208).

Persian garrisons in Europe

The firstfruits of the change were seen in the marvellous energy with which the maritime empire of Athens was built up and maintained. The power of the Persian king in Europe had been shattered, but it had not yet been extinguished. A Persian garrison still held the fortresses of Eion on the Strymon and the Thrakian Doriskos. From the latter, if we are to take the words of Herodotos strictly, they were not dislodged at the time when he was writing the concluding books of his history—in other

words, until long after the Peloponnesian war had begun. At Eion, which was besieged and taken by Kimon B.C. 477, the governor Boges resisted with a desperation known perhaps only to Asiatic peoples. According to the story of Herodotos, he slew his wives and concubines, his children and his servants, and, after throwing all his money into the Strymon, flung himself on the pyre which was to consume their bodies. We have instances of a resolution not less deadly in the conduct of the Jews at Massada in the days of Josephus, and at York in those of Richard I.; but we cannot fail to notice that the tale of Herodotos says nothing of the Persian garrison. It is exceedingly unlikely that they would be included under the head of the slaves or domestics of Boges; nor can we suppose that a body of men large enough to resist the armament of Kimon would allow themselves to be killed off to humour the whim of a desperate fanatic. We have to remember that, in the period which we have reached, we are still dealing with events for which we have no strictly contemporary records. Thucydides speaks of the Athenians as reducing the place to slavery, and this may refer to the Persian garrison. The Athenians certainly would not dream of enslaving the inhabitants unless these were actively on the Persian side.

If, on the fall of Eion, Kimon became master of no great amount of treasure, he opened for Athenian settlers a country of remarkable fertility and beauty. His services were acknowledged by his countrymen with a heartiness which, according to Plutarch, they had not shown either to Miltiades or to Themistokles. They dedicated three busts of Hermes, and the inscriptions, although they did not mention his name, clearly pointed to him as among the first of Athenian generals.

Honours bestowed on Kimon for military services

Kimon was now fairly embarked on a career which opened to Athenian citizens a large field of enterprise. The fall of Eion was preceded or followed by the reconquest of Lemnos (i. 96); and it was probably the convenience of Skyros as a station on the voyage to Lemnos which led him to attack

that island and enslave its piratical inhabitants, B.C. 476. The reduction of Skyros brought him a piece of good luck which he may have preferred to any addition to his wealth. The Athenians had long fixed their eyes on this rocky islet as the resting-place of the bones of their ancestral hero Theseus. The recovery of his remains was no doubt regarded as of vast importance for the prosperity of Athens; but the Dolopians, who held the island, refused absolutely to allow any search to be made for his sepulchre. This hindrance was now removed, and the relics (probably not until some few years had passed away) were conveyed with solemn pomp to Athens. How Kimon assured himself that he had hit upon the right relics Plutarch does not tell us. His reasons may have been as satisfactory as those which are said to have guided Henry II. to the discovery of the bones of king Arthur at Glastonbury; but the Spartan Lichas who found the body of Orestes at Tegea could at least urge its colossal size in proof of his assertion that the relics which he had dug up were those of the son of Agamemnon.

Reconquest of Lemnos, and reduction of Skyros, B.C. 476

In the same chapter which records the conquest of Eion and of Skyros by Kimon Thucydides speaks of the reduction of the Euboian Karystos, B.C. 476, and of the punishment of the revolted Naxians, B.C. 466, without mentioning the name of the general in command. But we may safely ascribe both these works to Kimon, and we should be glad to infer from his active employment elsewhere that he had nothing to do with the intrigues or conspiracies which led to the ostracism and exile of Themistokles (i. 179). At the least, we may say that we have no positive grounds for ascribing to him any complicity in the matter.

Kimon and the ostracism of Themistokles

In the work which remained to be done after the fall of Themistokles, Kimon was beyond doubt the chief instrument. We do not hear of him in connexion with the assessment of Aristeides (i. 185), and we may doubt whether he encouraged, so far as Plutarch

Extension of the Athenian empire

seems to imply, the disposition which led the Asiatic Hellenes to compound by money payments for personal service, or whether his colleagues were disposed to employ, in their dealings with these indolent confederates, methods of which Kimon did not approve. The Athenians found themselves in circumstances over which they had but little control, so far as the temper of their allies was concerned; and by making a virtue of necessity they greatly hastened the growth and extension of their empire.

Share of Kimon in the work

In this enterprise Kimon was thoroughly in earnest. He saw that the Persian power must not only be crushed in Europe, but be placed in Asia within bounds which should cut it off from all direct connexion with the Western world. His military genius taught him that in dealing with such an enemy the truest wisdom was to strike while the iron was hot; and he so succeeded in inspiring the men under his command with his own energy that one or two decisive blows finished the contest. As Plutarch expresses it, he left the Persians no time to breathe, and he had effectually cleared the Asiatic coast of their fleets as far as Pamphylia, when the tide of success bore him on to his double victory on the Eurymedon, B.C. 466.

Double victory on the Eurymedon, B.C. 466

Of these battles Plutarch professes to give a detailed description; but there is no life in his picture, and we learn little more from it than from the few lines in which the facts are recorded by Thucydides. It would seem that the commanders of the Phenician fleet, stationed off the mouth of the Eurymedon, were not prepared for his attack, and perhaps did not expect it, as they were awaiting the arrival of a reinforcement of eighty vessels then on their way from Cyprus. Kimon resolved to prevent the junction, if it should be possible to do so. The Phenician fleet opposed to him tried in vain to escape by running on shore. Two hundred ships were taken and destroyed, and this may have been nearly the whole number. The seamen who had manned the fleet added to the strength of the land army with which they were co-operating; and Kimon, seeing his

own spirit reflected in the countenances of his men, put them on shore to fight a second battle, the result, after a very hard struggle, being a crushing disaster for the Persians. Their camp, with its contents, fell into his hands.

Kimon was now among the wealthiest of Athenian citizens; but before he could rest from his toil there was one more task to be done. He hurried to meet the eighty Phenician ships on their way from Cyprus, and, if the account of Plutarch may be trusted, he sunk them all with almost the whole of their crews. The destruction of the Persian naval power was complete, and their power of resistance by land was irretrievably crippled. Kimon's glory had reached its greatest height, and the man who had been impoverished by the crushing fine of his father was now able, and as willing as he was able, to lavish his wealth in the carrying out of the great work still needed to secure Athens against the attacks of her enemies. The long walls which were to join the city with its harbour had to be carried across some boggy and swampy ground. The costs of providing a solid foundation were met by Kimon, with a feeling, it may well be, of legitimate pride.

Ruin of the Persian naval power

During the remaining fifteen years of his life, Kimon's military energy was as great as ever, and his final exploits were almost as brilliant as any in his earlier career; but he found himself involved in political movements of which he imperfectly understood the nature, and of which he failed, as even wiser men failed, to forecast the issue. The war with Thasos, B.C. 465, was one which connected itself with the more momentous struggle between Dorian and Ionian, which was to determine the course of all future European history. The inhabitants of this wealthy island drew a large yearly revenue from their Thrakian mines, and the extension of their trade roused in the minds of the Athenians a jealousy which soon led to open strife. The opposition of the Thasians was now treated as rebellion against the imperial city. Kimon was sent with a large force to blockade the island, while ten thousand

Kimon at Thasos, B.C. 465

Athenian settlers established themselves at the Nine Roads, the site of the future Amphipolis. The prospect of larger profits from mines in the interior drew these settlers away from their fortified post, and all, it is said, fell victims to an onslaught of the Edonian Thrakians, whose enmity had long ago proved fatal to the Milesian Aristagoras (i. 88).

This great catastrophe, however, brought no benefit to the Thasians. The blockade, begun by Kimon, was maintained strictly for three years, although for some portion of this time Kimon was not personally in command. The course of events was becoming gradually more complicated. The Thasians, convinced that their quarrel with Athens could be settled in their favour only by the intervention of the Spartans in their behalf, obtained from the latter a promise that they would invade Attica. The engagement itself showed with sufficient clearness the temper and disposition of the Spartans. With the Thasian controversy they had no concern; but Athens was growing great, and they could feel only hatred and fear of her increasing power.

Blockade of Thasos, B.C. 465–463

We can scarcely doubt that this promise would have been speedily fulfilled but for the occurrence of a calamity which would have involved a city like Athens in almost irretrievable ruin. Sparta and its neighbourhood were shaken by a terrible earthquake, which the Spartans ascribed to the vengeance of Poseidon for the impious withdrawal of the dying Pausanias from his sanctuary (i. 210). Among the stories told of Pausanias was one that he had sought by promises of freedom to obtain the aid of the Helots in his schemes of treason.

Earthquake at Sparta, B.C. 464

It is possible that these promises may have had something to do with their conduct after the earthquake. It is more likely that the incident seemed to them a heaven-sent opportunity for avenging themselves on masters whom they regarded with singularly bitter hatred. Breaking out into open revolt, they induced a large body of Perioikoi to join them; and thus the two classes of

Revolt of the Helots

the subject population of Lakonia were arrayed against the dominant Spartiatai, from whom we cannot say precisely how they were distinguished.

All three classes seem to have been Dorian. Herodotos at least knows of no distinction of race between the full Spartan citizen and the Perioikoi, or dwellers in the country; and the claim of the Helots to be Dorians cannot be disputed, if they were, as tradition averred them to be, conquered Messenians. In short, we cannot account for their name of Helots; we cannot say why some Dorians were not admitted to share all the privileges of Spartan citizens, or why certain others should be reduced to an abject villenage. But the fact is certain that the Spartans, who lived strictly as an army of occupation in an enemy's country, were regarded by these serfs with a deadly hatred.

The Helots and Perioikians

These revolted slaves with their Perioikian allies marched, or were pushed back, towards Ithômê, the stronghold where their forefathers had fought to the death in the old Messenian wars; and the Spartans found themselves engaged in a siege, which threatened to be a long one. For them a tedious blockade always carried with it an indefinite terror, and, fully conscious of their own incompetence, they turned for help to the very people whom they had agreed with the Thasians to ruin or to destroy.

Request of the Spartans for help from Athens

Their petition seems to have excited somewhat vehement debate. Ephialtes, supported by Perikles, urged, it is said, that the Spartans should be lèft to themselves (p. 2). Kimon pleaded with still greater vehemence against the wickedness or folly of allowing Hellas to be lamed in one leg, or of leaving Athens to draw the cart without a yokefellow. If Kimon supposed seriously that Sparta would ever be true yokefellow with Athens, he was fatally mistaken; but whatever may have been his convictions, his arguments for the present prevailed, and he was himself dispatched in command of an Athenian army to reduce the Helots besieged in Ithômê.

Debate in the Athenian assembly

He went, probably in high hopes of being able to lay the Spartans under an obligation which would insure their gratitude and friendship for all time to come. But he knew nothing of the compact with the Thasians; and as the siege of Ithômê proved to be a task too difficult even for Athenian expertness, the Spartans were filled with fears of new dangers. The consciousness of their own treason (for it was nothing less than treason to obtain the aid of a people whose country they were pledged to devastate) led them to impute the same immorality to others; and their minds were filled with alarm of the results which might follow a compact between the blockaded Helots and the forces which were besieging them.

Kimon at Ithômê.

With an awkward stupidity, which must have betrayed itself, they bluntly informed the Athenians that they had no further need of their services; and their troops, thus unceremoniously dismissed, returned home with feelings of indignation, which were fully shared by the main body of the citizens. The incident had made a deep impression. The philo-Lakonian policy of Kimon was cast to the winds. The alliance maintained with Sparta since the time of the Persian invasion was summarily renounced, and a new agreement was made with Argos, whose neutrality (i. 141) during the Persian war had proved to be for her a most fortunate policy. This inglorious inaction had enabled her to recover most of the power which she had lost. Towns celebrated in the strains of Homeric rhapsodists yielded to her arms. Tiryns submitted to her sway. Mykenai, resisting more stoutly, had its walls razed and its people sold into slavery. The success already achieved was great: with the help of Athens it might be made greater still.

Dismissal of the Athenian army by the Spartans

In short, the Spartans saw that in almost every direction the tide of events was moving strongly against themselves. Not only the Argives, but the Thessalians also, were confederated with the Athenians; and the alliance of Megara now brought about was to

Alliance of Megara with Athens, B.C. 461

Athens a fact of even greater importance, as making her mistress of the two Megarian ports, Nisaia on the Saronic, and Pegai on the Corinthian gulf. Even more, so long as Megara remained the ally of Athens, the latter, occupying the passes of Geraneia, could make a Spartan invasion of Attica practically impossible.

But long before the absorption of Megara into the Athenian alliance had taken place, the fate both of Thasos and of Ithômê had been determined. The revolt of the Helots had prevented the Spartans from redeeming their promise to invade Attica; and the Thasians, unable to carry on the struggle beyond the third year, submitted to Kimon, who had again appeared upon the scene. They were compelled to pull down their walls, to surrender their ships and all their property or possessions on the main land of Thrace, and to make good the sum total of the contributions which, as members of the Athenian confederation, they would have paid, if they had never revolted. (B.C. 463.)

Surrender of Thasos, B.C. 463

Eight years later, the Helots in Ithômê were compelled to make even harder terms with their masters. (B.C. 455.) They were to quit the Peloponnesos forthwith, and if they should dare to set foot there again, they should become the slaves of any who might catch them. Departing on these conditions, the whole multitude, men, women, and children, were received with open arms by the Athenians, who placed them in Naupaktos, which they had lately taken from the Ozolian Lokrians. The result of the Helot revolt was thus the establishment, at the head of the Corinthian Gulf, of a population as devoted to the interests of Athens as it was bitterly hostile to Sparta.

Expulsion of the Helots from Messene, B.C. 455

Some two years before the fall of Ithômê, Kimon had been compelled to leave Athens by a vote of ostracism (i. 68). He had, no doubt, exerted himself to the utmost to hinder or to retard the reforms of Ephialtes. It was to his credit that he did not profess to approve of changes which he disliked and dreaded; and his plainness of

Ostracism of Kimon, B.C. 457?

speech could not fail to stir his opponents to anger, and, if it should be in their power, to retaliation. The first occasion for a public attack upon him was found in the disaster which befell the Athenian settlers of the Nine Roads (p. 17). It was urged that he might, and that he ought to, have prevented this calamity. He was also charged with having received bribes from the Makedonian chief Alexandros. Both these charges fell to the ground, and he was formally acquitted. On the former charge the influence of Elpinike seems to have carried some weight in disarming the opposition of Perikles, although he is said to have dismissed her with the remark that she was too old to mix herself up with such matters. The ill-feeling excited by the contemptuous dismissal of the Athenian forces from Ithômê was of longer continuance, and was strengthened by his steady opposition to Ephialtes and Perikles. It was evident that the time was come for an application of the remedy of ostracism for the internal dissensions of the State.

The vote was eagerly welcomed by Kimon and his party, who felt assured that it would fall upon Perikles. They were mistaken. The presence of Kimon was declared to be inconsistent with the safety of Athens, and his departure removed all hindrances from the path of Ephialtes. It also saved him, happily, from all participation in a crime in which, had he remained at Athens, he might have become implicated. There is not the slightest ground for supposing that this straightforward soldier and not very far-seeing statesman had anything to do, either directly or indirectly, with the dastardly murder of Ephialtes. But we have evidence which seems clearly to establish his innocence.

Kimon free of all participation in the murder of Ephialtes

The most creditable act of Kimon's life was his hurrying from his place of banishment in the hope that he might be allowed to take part in the battle of Tanagra. The action here fought within sight of the Euripos was a signal check to the Athenians in the brilliant career of success which established their shortlived land-

Battle of Tanagra, B.C. 457

empire; and we may fairly regard the generous zeal which prompted Kimon to take part in the fight as evidence of his disgust with the men who had smitten down Ephialtes. His request that he might be suffered to fight was refused; but he besought his personal friends to show themselves worthy of their country; and these, to the number, it is said, of one hundred, fell to the last man. Their conduct, we are told, so won the admiration of their comrades that Kimon was soon afterwards recalled from exile.

Recall of Kimon

The decree rescinding the ostracism was proposed by Perikles, who thus performed for him the same friendly office which Themistokles had performed for Aristeides. Kimon returned, we cannot doubt, with his temper sobered down, for from this point in his history we can trace no positive antagonism between him and Perikles. It is not to be supposed that he would like the changes which had been, or were to be, introduced. Kimon's wisdom was shown in his being content to serve henceforth as a military leader, taking no part in the political controversies of the Athenian city.

Battle of Oinophyta, B.C. 457

Before Kimon's return from exile, the empire of Athens had been raised, by the splendid victory of Myronides at Oinophyta, to the greatest height which it ever reached. As the result of this battle, the Boiotians and Phokians became the subject allies (i. 127) of Athens, which was now supreme from Megara to Thermopylai. Of this land-empire Kimon did not live to see the catastrophe, which came some eight years later, and in the wonderful military energy which raised and maintained it he would feel the keenest satisfaction. It was not that the tide of success flowed evenly for them everywhere; but even severe reverses failed to depress the courage or quench the resolution of a people who seemed to be urged on by some unconquerable impulse to incessant activity.

Egypt was in revolt against the power of the Persian king. This was a sufficient reason for sending help to the revolted Egyptians. Two hundred triremes dispatched to the aid of

the Libyan Inaros were, it seems, all lost. A reinforcement of fifty more is said to have fared no better. But if the ships were lost, the men, we are told, were able to make a treaty with the Persian commander Megabyzos for their quiet departure to Kyrênê. Even after these great losses the Athenian people sent a force of sixty triremes to the help of Amyrtaios in the fens. We may note the fact simply as evidence of their unwearied perseverance, for from the measure itself they obtained no benefit.

Destruction of the Athenian fleet at Memphis

But if the Spartans supposed that these reverses might exhaust the Athenians, they were doomed to be disappointed. Before the fortress of Ithômê was surrendered to them, the Athenians were in possession of the passes of Geraneia; and three years later (B.C. 452) the Spartans made with the Athenians a truce for five years, which enabled the latter to give their whole mind to the operations against the Persian king. The carrying on of this work had been the great task of Kimon's life. At home he felt that it was hopeless for him to attempt to counteract the ascendency of Perikles. At sea he might strike fresh terror into an enemy already often defeated, while he might also enrich his country and himself. He went, therefore, on a welcome errand when he sailed with two hundred ships for Cyprus. Having reached the island, he despatched sixty of his triremes to help Amyrtaios in Egypt. With the rest he besieged the city Kition, by whose name the island generally was known (as the land of Chittim) to the Semitic traders.

Mission of Kimon to Cyprus, B.C. 452

Here, with his work done, or all but done, Kimon died. But the narrative of the events which took place during the last months of his life is anything but clear; and in fact we suffer for the loss of a strictly contemporary record. Thucydides tells us that on his death famine compelled the Athenians to withdraw from Kition, that off Salamis they fell in with the Phenician fleet, which they shattered, inflicting at the same time a severe defeat on the Kilikian troops on shore, and that after this

Death of Kimon, B.C. 450

double victory they returned to Athens, together with the squadron which had been detached to the help of Amyrtaios. In Plutarch the story has assumed a somewhat different colouring. The Athenians, as they leave Kition, carrying with them the body of Kimon, are still under the protection of their old commander, the spell of whose name wins for them the double victory. According to Diodoros, Kimon lives not only to take Kition, but to share in the double victory, and then to blockade Salamis, where the Persians had stored their corn and their munitions of war. Unable to stand out against this series of disasters, Artaxerxes sent to Athens ambassadors charged with proposals for peace; and the Athenians, dispatching their own envoys to Sousa headed by Kallias (not the Kallias who married Elpinike, but the hereditary Dadouchos or torch-bearer of the Eleusinian mysteries), concluded the treaty which bears his name. This treaty, we are told, bound the Persian king to send no ships of war westward of Phaselis or the Chelidonian islands—in other words, beyond the eastern promontory of Lykia—to allow none of his satraps to approach nearer than three days' journey to the sea-coast, and to respect the Thrakian Bosporos as the entrance to Hellenic waters.

Treaty of Kallias

In the pages of Plutarch this convention is transferred from the closing campaign of Kimon to the time of his double victory on the Eurymedon, some fifteen years before. He adds, however, that there were not wanting some who denied the reality of the treaty, and who held that it merely threw into legal form arrangements to which either side found it convenient in its own interest to adhere. By Thucydides it is left unnoticed. By the orators of later generations it was regarded as among the most splendid of Athenian achievements. According to Demosthenes it pledged the Persian king to approach no nearer to the Egean than a day's journey for a horse. In the more ideal picture of Isokrates it bound him to regard the Halys as the limit of his dominion. In contradiction to Plutarch, who speaks of Kallias as being received with the highest honours on his return home, Demosthenes adds that in the

conduct of this embassy he was brought under suspicion of bribery, and that, although he escaped with his life, he had to pay a fine of fifty talents. It is not easy to see what more could have been expected of Kallias; but the circumstantial narrative of his trial and condemnation is no conclusive proof of fact in the absence of a well-attested contemporary record, while the inflated expressions of later writers, not less than the silence of Thucydides, have gone far towards banishing the treaty itself within the regions of fiction.

The double victories of Kimon

The mere repetition of a double victory twice in Kimon's life is, of itself, in a high degree suspicious; but the question is happily one in which to some extent we have the guidance of admitted facts. The last campaign of Kimon is in the pages of Thucydides the end of Athenian warfare against the Persian king; and the return of the squadron from Egypt along with the fleet which Kimon had retained at Cyprus seems to point to some agreement, by which hostilities were to be at once and definitely terminated. That the treaty was a fact, and that the ambassador charged with the conduct of it was Kallias, is further confirmed by the strange passage in which Herodotos speaks of an Athenian embassy headed by Kallias as present, many years after the Persian invasion, at Sousa, along with another embassy from Argos, sent to renew the old alliance of that city with Xerxes. That Herodotos had been wrongly informed as to the purpose of the Argive embassy, there can be little doubt. It is not likely that just at the moment when Athens was at the zenith of her greatness and the Persian power had undergone its worst humiliations, the Argives should nervously deprecate the enmity of Artaxerxes; but it is altogether likely that they should take advantage of the mission which was to arrange terms of peace between the eastern and the western world, to assure the Great King that they looked back without regret to the part which they had played in the days of Leonidas and Mardonios.

It is, further, scarcely a matter of doubt that from this time down to the great catastrophe which befell the power

of Athens at Syracuse, no attempt was made on the part of the Persians to exact from the Greek cities in Lesser Asia the tribute for which, nevertheless, they stood assessed in the king's book according to the Domesday of Darius. We are thus brought to the conclusion that, whether the treaty of Kallias be a reality or not, the conditions said to be prescribed by it were actually observed for nearly forty years. The convention wrought practically no change. It simply gave a formal sanction to arrangements which both parties considered to be to their own interest, or which the greater power of the Athenians virtually dictated to the weakened power of the Persian king.

Significance of the convention of Kallias

To the Athenians living at the time, the treaty was, in itself, a matter of extremely slight importance: to those of later generations it became naturally the evidence of political conditions which had become things of the past, and to which they looked back with a jealous and sensitive pride. The silence of the former and the exaggerated rhetoric of the latter are thus alike accounted for. It must not, however, be forgotten that, according to Plutarch, the terms of the treaty were engraved on a pillar and set up at Athens. It is true, indeed, that this fact does not necessarily prove the genuineness of the monument; but we may at the least say that the reality of the convention is more likely than that the orators fabricated it with a deliberate purpose and with the false name of an envoy conjoined. On this hypothesis their cleverness is shown in fastening on the name of a man whom Herodotos, as we have seen, incidentally mentions as having been an envoy from Athens at Sousa at some time or other between the siege of Sestos, B.C. 479, and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war.

Question of the genuineness of the treaty

On the whole, then, we may infer that some kind of agreement was made, and that this agreement was substantially such as it is described to have been. But it is altogether less likely that Kimon had anything to do with it. The cessation of the war would

Kimon not a promoter of the convention

have been not much to his interest and very little to his liking; and if this reason be, as it seems, conclusive against his being a party to such a convention at the close of his life, it disposes effectually of the notion that he sanctioned such a treaty after his double victory on the Eurymedon fifteen years earlier. The vague phrases of Diodoros cannot overbear the positive statement of Thucydides, with whom Kimon was personally connected (p. 11), that his death took place during the siege of Kition. Had he lived, Kimon would have been probably not the promoter, but the strenuous opponent of a peace which would reduce him to political insignificance.

PERIKLES

To the question who were the two greatest of Athenian citizens the answer must without doubt be, Themistokles and Perikles. Without the former imperial Athens could scarcely have come into being: without the latter it would never have become what it was in the days of its greatest glory. The two men stand in the closest relation to each other. The mantle of Themistokles fell directly on Perikles, who was old enough to take the full measure of the work which his master had done before the narrowmindedness of his opponents drove him into exile. With his whole heart and soul he gave himself to the development and completion of that work; and in so doing he displayed a strength of genius and a force of will in no way inferior to that of his illustrious guide.

Perikles a disciple of Themistokles

The character of Themistokles, as drawn by Thucydides, suggests a difference between them which was perhaps rather apparent than real. In the emphatic words of Thucydides, the most astonishing thing about Themistokles was his power of perception and apprehension. What other men attained with vast labour, he grasped with none. His instinctive statesmanship needed no previous training, and rested on no lessons of experience. The difficulties of the present he met with instantaneous resolution; and he rarely, if ever, failed to form at once an accurate forecast of the future. Perikles, on the other hand, entered on public life, it is said, after a long time of thorough retirement, during which he took

Supposed contrast between Perikles and Themistokles

counsel with the best and wisest teachers of the age, and gave himself to a course of study which brought to perfection his marvellous natural powers.

Probable reasons for the difference

This seeming difference of genius and character is due probably to the difference of the circumstances with which each had to deal. When Themistokles began his political career, it would have been impossible for anyone to anticipate the course of Athenian history during the next generation. Perikles saw his way with the utmost clearness, and he could speak of the coming fortunes of Athens with perfect confidence, subject to certain conditions, which he described with almost minute exactness. Themistokles was constantly called upon to deal with the most anxious alternatives, and to do so almost on the spur of the moment. Perikles never had to face any such complications, and his hardest task was to keep up the courage of the people under difficulties which for himself involved no perplexity whatever. Themistokles saw clearly that for Athens there was only one way to greatness, and he pushed on towards this goal, which to other eyes was scarcely visible. Perikles perceived not less clearly that only in one way could the greatness and the empire of Athens be maintained, and he was never weary of repeating a warning, the wisdom of which was terribly vindicated by the bitter experience of the future.

Lineage and early years of Perikles

Xanthippos, the father of Perikles, was the Athenian commander in the great battle of Mykalê, which is said to have been fought on the same day with that of Plataia (i. 166). Through his mother Agaristê, the great-granddaughter of the Sikyonian Kleisthenes (i. 60), he was connected with the great tribe of the Alkmaionids (i. 49). He thus started with all the advantages which birth and fortune could bestow upon him; and it might have been supposed that the associations of his youth would attach him to the Eupatrid rather than to the popular party. To this notion may be traced the insinuations that throughout his life Perikles was acting a part, and

upholding the cause of the Demos when his heart was with the oligarchs.

In justification of such a suspicion not a shred of evidence can be adduced; and therefore the suspicion is in itself worth nothing. There is not the slightest ground for thinking that Perikles ever felt a moment's hesitation as to the course which it was his duty to follow, or that he was in any degree impelled to this duty by regard for his own interests. He was sprung from the Athenian Kleisthenes; the marvel would have been if, eschewing the convictions of his grandfather, he had followed the example of Peisistratos, to whom his person, it is said, exhibited not a little likeness.

Consistent career of Perikles

Of the education of Themistokles we know not much; of that of Perikles our knowledge is far more full. Brought into contact with the foremost thinkers of the time, he eagerly received from them all the wisdom which they could impart; and the instruction of all had the one effect of strengthening his independence of thought and judgment. It was not wonderful that with such a training, the young Perikles became possessed of a learning and eloquence which few statesmen have equalled in any land, and of a judicial calmness of mind which rose far above the prejudices and superstitions of the age.

His education

It mattered not if from some of his teachers he learnt some things which might now excite a smile even from the unlearned. They were all offered as honest efforts to explain supposed facts; and as such, they were an earnest of the most valuable discoveries of later science. By Anaxagoras, who had left Klazomenai to teach astronomy at Athens, Perikles was taught that the earth was a plane and that the sun was a mass of ignited stone larger than the Peloponnesos. The conclusions were wrong: but they were answers to questions which searched for the origin and the ordering of things. For the growth of the human mind the plunge into those questions was the one thing needed. The right to examine things in themselves was established by the

His teachers

man who first attempted to do so: and the right, exercised at first in one direction, was rapidly asserted in others. The ecclesiastical yoke which crushed the growth of art in Babylonia or in Egypt was by the Greeks borne impatiently and finally cast aside; and the rebellion was justified and rewarded by the growth of the schools of art which achieved the glories of the Parthenon and revealed to the world the majesty of the Olympian Zeus.

As a pupil or as a friend, Perikles in the course of his life was intimate not only with Anaxagoras, but with Protagoras, Zenon, Pythokleides, Damon, and Pheidias. How far he may have agreed with the systems of philosophy thus put before him we cannot say. The differences which separated one from the other must have compelled him to examine and to trust to his own judgement with regard to all. If he held with Anaxagoras that the sensible world, though not created by Mind, was still arranged, ordered, and governed by it, he could not follow very far the guidance of Protagoras which, by making man the measure of everything, made all existence dependent on his sensations and perceptions, and so rendered all existence and all knowledge impossible. He found another friend or instructor in the Eleatic Zenon, who came to Athens with Parmenides, (? B.C. 460), and there became known to Sokrates, then a mere youth. Zenon is spoken of as the inventor of that method of Dialectic which became so powerful an instrument in the hands of Sokrates and Plato, and which may be described as a mode of establishing truth by reducing to an absurdity the opinions of opponents. The influence of Zenon on Perikles may well have been considerable; that of men like Pythokleides, Damon, and Pheidias was probably far greater.

Perikles and the philosophers

Of these three, the first two were his instructors in music, in the wide meaning always attached to the term by the Greeks, and not in our present restricted sense which would for them have rendered the word meaningless or misleading. Music for them included every-

His training in music

t'ning belonging to the provinces of all the Muses, and embraced therefore in some sort every branch of human knowledge. It taught the use of the lyre and the way to take part in a chorus: but it taught also the art of poetical composition, and took in, necessarily, all that would bear upon this subject. As teachers of music in this sense, Pythokleides and Damon were Sophists, professional teachers who taught for pay and who were not on this account subject to the odium which Plato, and perhaps Sokrates, afterwards strove to throw upon them.

Friendship of Perikles with Damon and Pheidias

With Damon Perikles lived on terms of the most intimate friendship; and there is no reason for supposing that his relations with Pheidias were less close. In this great sculptor he might hold communion with one of the greatest and purest of human minds, and from him he could not fail to learn the inseparable connexion between the world of sense and the world of spirit, and the impossibility of divorcing goodness from beauty, if beauty is to retain its life.

Attacks on Perikles through his friends

With the aid of Pheidias and the illustrious band of men who worked under him, Perikles made Athens the wonder and pride of the world. In their greatness his own glory was reflected; but it is scarcely in human nature to look on surpassing eminence without a tinge of jealousy and without even the shadow of a temptation to pull down those who have achieved it. We shall accordingly see that the fortunes of most of these great men were bound up with those of Perikles, and that the efforts which failed to bring about his downfall were only too successful in achieving their ruin.

Date of the birth of Perikles

The public career of Perikles is said to have extended over forty years. He survived the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, as we know, for two years and a half. His death, therefore, took place in the year 429 B.C. His active life as a statesman began, therefore, shortly after the ostracism of Themistokles and before the death of Aristeides. But of the date of his birth

we cannot speak positively. He may have been only an infant when the armament of Datis and Artaphernes was crushed at Marathon.

At no time after he had reached manhood was there any lack of persons who would have rejoiced in his downfall and done all that they could to promote it. His safety was insured in great part, no doubt, by his transcendent ability, but in no slight degree also by his personal incorruptibility. Greek statesmen generally have not been conspicuous for this quality; and those of Sparta, as we have seen, had attained an unenviable notoriety for the opposite vice. Themistokles, it seems had taken no special care to avoid suspicions which even the more rigid integrity of Aristeides could not always ward off (i. 127). But although he may have grasped at money, it certainly cannot be said that he ever changed his plans or hesitated in carrying them out for the sake of money. In this respect he was as firm as Perikles himself. Bribery and corruption are, therefore, terms which cannot in strictness be applied to him. But while Themistokles was ready to receive money, Perikles was resolved that, if it were possible, he would leave no room even for suspicion that he was open to any such influences; and in this he fully succeeded. If the smallest chink had been left in his armour, his enemies would not have failed to pierce it; and they would have been doubly pleased to find any such rifts, because he was as free as Kimon himself from all the arts and tricks which are supposed to form the stock in trade of a demagogue. It would, obviously, have been little to the purpose to sneer at him for his somewhat cold and repellent dignity. It was an easier and more profitable task to ascribe his public acts to unworthy personal motives, and, more especially in the closing years of his life, to insinuate that he had plunged the city into the Peloponnesian war to satisfy a private grudge or avenge a personal wrong. We shall see that these aspersions have no basis of fact whatever. The gossip which multiplied them is, indeed, sufficiently discredited by the counter stories men-

His personal integrity

tioned by Plutarch, that seeing the struggle to be inevitable, he sent yearly the sum of ten talents to Sparta to keep her quiet by bribing her most influential citizens. He cannot have done this and at the same time have hurried on the crisis.

We shall have to notice some of these slanders later on. But in truth, if we wish to avoid an absurd misapprehension of his character, we must rise to a higher region, for the motives which may really account for and explain his conduct. His abilities were vast and his wisdom was profound; but they were not boundless, and nothing is gained by ascribing to him a foresight greater than that which he had attained. That Athens should be an imperial city he was as steadily resolved as Themistokles. He was not less determined that she should stand at the head of a league of confederated allies; but his theory of this confederation was inadequate. To say this is not to impute blame to him. It is rather, nay it is greatly, to his praise that he should have taken in hand a work the progress of which soon began to show him that the basis of Greek political life was altogether wrong, if the establishment of a permanent order of things was the purpose to be aimed at.

His idea of an Athenian confederation

If, then, we wish to understand Perikles, we must examine the conditions under which the Athenian empire was acquired and extended; and this task will show at once the ends which Perikles set before himself in the interests of Athens, and through Athens of the whole Hellenic world, nay even of the world beyond its borders, and also the origin and nature of the opposing influences which rendered all his efforts useless and paved the way for the imperialism of Rome.

Conditions of the growth of Athenian empire

No one could see more clearly than Herodotos that the devotion of the Athenians to the common cause of Hellas, and their resolute persistence when all others seemed to be paralysed with fear, had defeated the great enterprise of Xerxes and brought to nought the far more formidable schemes of Mardonios (i. 136). The history

Panhellenism

of their self-sacrifice and its results should have taught them the very plain lesson that the welfare of the Hellenic world could be insured only through a real union. This lesson was never learnt, although Perikles in some degree apprehended it. But, indeed, not a few of the signs of the times immediately following the victories of Salamis, Plataia, and Mykalê were delusive. It was only the need of strenuous exertion in a common cause against an enemy still capable of mischief which impelled Aristeides and his colleagues to receive the representatives of the allied cities as their equals in the synod of Delos. It soon became difficult if not impossible to do so, when some of these allies wished to shirk all further toil and when the Athenians were, nevertheless, determined that the struggle should go on.

The Delian synod

The Delian synod (i. 127) came to an end; and it was, we are told, at the expressed wish of the Samians that the confederate treasury should be moved to Athens, as its retention at Delos would render necessary a constant guard round the island. As a necessary consequence, Athens behaved henceforth rather as a mistress than an ally. A few of the most important cities might keep their fleets; the rest had yielded up their ships to Athens, with the special stipulation that an addition to the sum paid as tribute should secure them freedom from personal service. The responsibility imposed on the Athenians was a heavy one; but it was conscientiously and effectually discharged. No Persian ships were allowed to enter the waters of the Egean; the cities of the Asiatic coast remained free; and a large reserve fund was stored up to meet the possible needs of future warfare, if the struggle with Persia should be renewed.

The allies of Athens

But for evidence that Athens desired between her allies and herself that intimate union which would cement them into a single people, we look in vain. They were not invited to pronounce their judgement as to any course of action on which she had herself resolved, and if they were unwilling to follow her, their disinclination was overborne by force or treated as rebellion; and keenly

though each could discern the immediate interests of Athens, neither Themistokles nor Perikles could perceive the radical weakness of an empire which had no other basis than that of physical restraint. Perikles had his Panhellenic theories; and in these theories there were the germs of a future growth which might, and which would, have altered the history of the world, if they had not been deliberately nipped and violently crushed.

Desire of Perikles for a Panhellenic congress

Plutarch tells us that, when the extension of Athenian power first roused the jealousy of Sparta, Perikles made a strong effort to gather a Panhellenic congress at Athens; but he gives no date for an incident which some place after the beginning of the Thirty Years' Truce, B.C. 446, while others assign it to a time preceding the battle of Tanagra, B.C. 457. This congress was, we are told, to consider the measures for restoring the temples ruined during the Persian invasion, and for securing the safety of maritime trade for the Greek cities generally. The former point was inconsistent with the letter of the resolution at first entered into, that they should be left in ruins as a memorial of the past; the latter was manifestly a subject of extreme importance. But the plan, he adds, came to nothing, because the Spartans set their faces against it, as to the last they continued steadily to oppose everything which could add to the political safety, strength, and happiness of the whole Greek world.

The Athens of Perikles

Perikles rose to an immense height above these miserable and contemptible prejudices. He had a sincere desire that the rule of Athens should be for the highest benefit of all who might be brought under it; but this great end was to be realised rather by magnifying Athens than by treating the allies as if they also were Athenians. Athens with him was to be the school of Hellas by uniting within her walls all that was greatest in science, all that was most brilliant in culture, all that was most magnificent in art. Nor can it be denied that, during the short period of six-and-thirty years which intervened between the

retreat of Xerxes and the Thirty Years' Truce, the work in which Perikles was the chief instrument had justified the title of Athens to something like imperial ascendency. It would have been a blessing for the world generally, if the ideas which even Perikles attached to the term had been more like those which are now being worked out in the empire of Great Britain; but for such ideas the time was not then come. The real curse for the Greek world was the persistent energy with which Sparta barred the way to the slightest movements in this direction.

Work done after the Invasion of Xerxes

The contrast between the condition of things at the beginning of the six-and-thirty years which followed the discomfiture of Xerxes and that which was realised before they came to an end was great indeed. The Athenians had come back from their self-imposed exile to a ravaged land and desolate towns. Their sustained energy had cleared the Egean waters of Persian fleets, had secured the freedom of the Asiatic Greeks, and united them in a permanent confederacy (i. 125). The walls with which, in spite of Spartan jealousy (i. 174), Athens had been girt, had taken away all fear of any sudden attack; and the fortified harbour of Peiraieus had provided a home for a large population, whose life was bound up with the life of the democracy, and whose orderly industry had disarmed the opposition and prompted the reforms of Aristeides (i. 124).

Feelings of Perikles for Kimon

From the first Perikles had been thoroughly convinced that from Sparta Athens could expect nothing but resistance, either active or passive; nor had he cared to conceal his own feelings on the subject. When, on the uprising of the Helots, Kimon had pleaded earnestly for sending help to the Spartans (p. 18), he had not hesitated to express his approval of the advice of his friend Ephialtes (p. 2); and we may be sure that the welcome given to the Helots at Naupaktos (p. 20) was in great measure due to his influence. But while he confessed his dislike of Sparta, he felt no rancour for the philo-Lakonian Kimon; and when the latter was impeached for neglecting to retrieve

the disaster of the Athenian colonists on the Strymon, the manifest indifference with which Perikles made the charge had much probably to do with his acquittal (p. 21). It was scarcely to be expected that this issue should effect any change in the disposition of Kimon. He still continued, conscientiously no doubt, but shortsightedly, to withstand the policy of Ephialtes and Perikles, and the result was, as we have seen, his ostracism.

The time was one of great tumult and agitation. The enrolment of Megara, B.C. 461 (p. 19), in the new Athenian league had roused fierce wrath in the minds of the Corinthians and their allies of Epidauros and Egina. Furious at the events which had robbed them of their maritime ascendency, the Eginetans rushed into war with Athens, trusting to the tactics which had been successful at Salamis and Mykalê. They came out of the battle ruined as a maritime power. Seventy of their ships were taken, and Egina itself was blockaded. The Spartans, who would gladly have struck a blow at Athens while her main forces were occupied elsewhere, could not stir from before Ithômê, although the Persian Megabazos had come to inforce with large bribes the immediate invasion of Attica for the purpose of drawing off the Athenian armament from Egypt (p. 22). But that which the Spartans could not attempt, the Corinthians tried to carry through, only, however, to undergo a decisive defeat at the hands of the Athenian Myronides.

War between Athens and Egina, B.C. 455

The energy displayed at this time by the Athenian people is, indeed, astonishing. One Athenian army was besieging Egina: another was absent in Egypt. Yet this was the time chosen by Perikles for carrying out at home the plan which, more than any other, would go far towards realising the calculations or the dreams of Themistokles. We have good grounds for supposing that Themistokles would have abandoned Athens altogether, if it had been practicable to do so. But if this might not be, the next object to be aimed at was the uniting of Athens with

Building of the Long Walls of Athens

her harbours; and this object could be attained by the construction of two walls, one of about four and a half, and another of about four, English miles in length. Such an enterprise could not fail to excite to the utmost the jealousy and fears of the Peloponnesian cities, and to create a deep anxiety amongst the conservative statesmen of Athens, who regarded the friendship of Sparta as a privilege to be retained at all costs except that of dishonour to their country. But it was the necessary result of the policy of Themistokles; and the great man who was to carry on his work united with his wisdom and courage a personal integrity which virtually raised him above all danger of attack.

There was, therefore, nothing to withhold him from adopting the only means by which Athens might bid defiance to all her invaders; and it became clear to the Spartans that her growth could be arrested only by setting up a counterpoise to her influence in northern Hellas. The idea of a regularly organised confederation was hateful to them; but for the sake of checking Athens they swallowed down their dislike, and set to work to restore the supremacy of the Boiotian city, which with an ardour betraying the preponderance of alien blood in its population (i. 141) had thrown itself into the arms of Xerxes. If we may believe Diodoros, a formal agreement bound the Thebans, in return for the good offices of the Spartans, so to keep Athens in check in time of war, as to render unnecessary any invasion of Attica from the Peloponnesos.

Restoration of Theban supremacy in Boiotia by the Spartans

But even before the fall of Ithômê the Spartans had sent 1,500 of their own heavy-armed soldiers, with 10,000 of their allies, to rescue from the Phokians one of the three Dorian towns which formed the Lakedaimonian metropolis. We can scarcely suppose that so large a force was needed to deliver a Dorian village from a clan of mountaineers; and there can be little doubt that the clue to these operations is to be found in the intrigues of some Athenians (noticed only in passing by Thucydides),

Spartan expedition into Phokis B.C. 457

who prayed them to remain in Boiotia, and so to aid them in a conspiracy for upsetting the Athenian democracy and arresting the erection of the Long Walls. In no way dismayed by these dangers, the Athenians hastened to meet their enemies in Boiotia; nor were they cast down by the defeat which they underwent at Tanagra, B.C. 457. The Spartans and their allies gained nothing by their victory beyond the power of making their way home safely through the passes of Geraneia; and two months later, by the battle of Oinophyta, Myronides carried the Athenian power to its utmost limits. The Boiotians and Phokians became the subject allies of the Athenians, who set up democracies everywhere. The land empire of Athens extended now from Megara to Thermopylai, and the fall of Egina added that island to her maritime dominion.

Proposal of Perikles for the recall of Kimon, B.C. 455

It was, we can scarcely doubt, a knowledge of this oligarchic conspiracy against the democratic constitution of Athens which impelled Perikles to oppose the wish of Kimon to take part in the battle of Tanagra. He suspected, it would seem unjustly, that Kimon was concerned in this conspiracy; but the behaviour of Kimon's friends (p. 22) fully convinced him of his mistake, and he came back from the battle, in which he had exhibited a bravery almost to be condemned as reckless and frantic, resolved to do justice to his great political adversary. The recall of Kimon, proposed by Perikles, did much to soften the antagonism of political parties in Athens.

Operations of Perikles in Peloponnesos and Akarnania, B.C. 445

This recall probably took place after the operations conducted by Perikles on the coasts of the Corinthian gulf, B.C. 455. His attack on Sikyon had no decisive result; nor was his attempt to establish Athenian supremacy in Thessaly by the restoration of the chief or king Orestes crowned with more success. The failure of these schemes did not deter him from a more distant expedition, or leave him without spirit for further enterprise when the blockade of the Akarnanian

Oiniadai ended also in failure. The inclusion of the Achaians in the Athenian confederacy was a compensation for many reverses, and among these for the disasters of the Egyptian expedition, of which he had always strongly disapproved.

In these operations, and in everything else which she undertook, Athens was committing herself to a course in which her success must depend on perfect unanimity amongst her citizens. She was compelling the members of her confederation to work together for a common end; and this alone was enough to excite the instinctive hatred of Greeks generally. So far as the surrender might be needed, Athens called upon them to give up their independence; and refusal had been followed by prompt chastisement. In short, Athens was doing violence to the sentiment which regarded the city as the ultimate unit of society; and in order to break up her league, Sparta availed herself of this feeling with complete and most disastrous success. The temper of Sparta was sufficiently shown by her readiness to restore to Thebes the hegemony or primacy which she claimed over the cities of Boiotia; and the designs of Athens, on the other hand, were explained by the substitution of democracy for oligarchy—that is, of the rule of the commons for the supremacy of the Eupatrids or patricians, in the cities subjected to her rule. These democracies, it is clear, could not be set up except by expelling those of the Eupatrid citizens who refused to accept the change; and as few were prepared to accept it, a formidable body of exiles, fierce in their hatred of Athens, was scattered through Hellas, and was busily occupied nearer home in schemes for upsetting the new constitution.

Conditions necessary for the safety of the Athenian empire

Nine years after the battle of Oinophyta the storm burst on the shores of the lake Kopaïs. The banished Eupatrids had made themselves, as Thucydides tells us, masters of Orchomenos, Chaironeia, and some other Boiotian cities. To Tolmides, an Athenian general of no small distinction, who had burnt the Spartan arsenal at Gytheion, and taken from the Lokrians Naupaktos, the

Defeat of Tolmides at Koroneia B.C. 447

present home of the Helots (p. 20), these movements looked like a flagrant defiance of the Athenian people. We cannot doubt that Perikles would regard them in the same light; but he condemned as hasty and ill-timed the proposal of Tolmides to march against them at once, with such of the citizens as might volunteer for the service. His campaign was at first successful. He took Chaironeia, and having left a garrison there, was marching southwards when he was attacked in the territory of Koroneia by a body of Orchomenian exiles with others from Lokris and Euboia. The result was for the Athenians a ruinous defeat, in which almost all who survived the battle were taken prisoners. Roman feeling might have left these prisoners to their fate, as it left those who survived the fight at Cannæ; but the Athenians either could not so afford to drain their strength, or shrunk from dealing out to them so hard a measure, and in order to recover them they entered into a formal compact with the Boiotians for the evacuation of the whole country, the result being the immediate restoration not only of all the banished Boiotian Eupatrids, but also of those who belonged to Phokis, Lokris, and Euboia.

The mischief could hardly end with the abandonment of Boiotia. The exiles who now returned to Euboia declared the island in revolt against Athens. Sent with an Athenian force to put down the rebellion, Perikles had barely more than landed when he received the far more alarming tidings that Megara had renounced the Athenian alliance. He reached Athens to find that a Spartan army, under the king Pleistoanax, was already ravaging the country round Eleusis and Thrious. But the Spartans advanced no farther. Their leader either felt that his forces were inadequate to the task before them, or was open, as his adversaries insisted, to the argument of gold. However this may have been, he atoned for his sin or his misfortune by years of banishment at Tegea. Aristophanes hints at a story which related that when in after years Perikles was called upon to submit his accounts to public inspection, there ap-

Revolt of Euboia and Megara, B.C. 446

peared an item of ten talents spent on a needful purpose, and that the Athenians, knowing well what this purpose had been, allowed the item to pass without question.

The retreat of Pleistoanax, whatever may have been its cause, left Perikles and the Athenians free to deal with the Euboians as they might think fit. It cannot be said that they contented themselves with half measures. The whole island was reduced, and definite treaties were made with all the towns, with the one exception of Histiaia, from which the inhabitants were expelled, Athenian settlers being introduced in their place. But although this speedy conquest showed that the Athenians had lost none of their old energy, the idea of an empire by land answering to their empire by sea had vanished into the region of fancies never to be realised. Nisaia and Pegai, the two Megarian ports, were still in their hands; but with this exception they had lost all hold on the Peloponnesos, and hence the Thirty Years' Truce, B.C. 445, which followed the reduction of Euboia, like the real or supposed treaty of Kallias (p. 24), did no more than give a formal sanction to certain accomplished facts. As things had now gone, the Athenians surrendered little when they gave up these Megarian ports, and with them gave up also Troizen and Achaia. But it was easier to evacuate Megara than to forgive the Megarians. Of the motives which prompted their action we know little or nothing. Of their own free will they had asked for admission into the Athenian confederacy, and during the ten years of their alliance they had received many benefits and undergone no wrongs. We have no record of political changes in Megara which might account for the sudden desertion. They had lightly flung away an alliance which they had eagerly courted, and they left in the Athenian mind a feeling of exasperation which in after years found expression in acts of severe reprisals.

The Thirty Years' Truce, B.C. 445

For two years after the ratification of the Thirty Years' Truce, Thoukydides, the son of Melesias, continued to lead the party of reaction, which Kimon had led so long. Both

disliked the growth of democracy at home; both had in some way convinced themselves that their own party interests would be promoted by prolonging the war with the Persian king. Perikles was content with what had been done already; and so long as the waters of the Egean were kept clear of Persian ships, he saw little use in attempting more distant conquests. The catastrophe which followed the wilfulness of Tolmides served only to strengthen the influence which Perikles, who had opposed his ill-fated expedition, exercised over the Athenian people. As the latter looked with favour on the designs of Perikles for the embellishment of the imperial city, the antagonism of the patrician party became more intense; and once more it became clear that resort must be had to ostracism. Like Kimon, Thoukydides felt assured that the vote would send his great rival into exile. The result was his own banishment; and Perikles had now no further resistance to encounter in carrying out the public works on which he had set his mind.

Ostracism of Thoukydides, son of Melesias, B.C. 443

The military portion of the great task had been practically accomplished already. The two long walls were finished; but between them was a large space which, if held by an enemy, might be a cause of serious danger as well as of more petty annoyance. Perikles therefore carried from the city a third wall, running parallel to the western or Peiraic wall at a distance of 550 feet, and turning to the south at a point about 400 yards before it reached the harbour of Mounychia, which it was designed to protect. Of this Phaleric wall not a vestige now remains. The inference to be drawn from this fact is not that Thucydides was inaccurate in his description, but that Konon restored only two walls, the breaches in which were repaired by the materials of the third wall.

Building of the Phaleric wall

But the costliest works of Perikles were confined within much narrower limits, and were of a very different kind. A new theatre, called the Odeion, rose in the city, as a worthy home for the Athenian drama in the great Panathenaic fes-

tival, while gigantic portals, known as the Propylaia, guarded the entrance to the summit of the little hill on which art of every kind achieved its highest triumphs. The Erechtheion, or shrine of Athênê Polias, had been burnt during the Persian occupation of the city, and together with other temples then defaced or destroyed, it was to remain unrestored as a memorial of the insults offered by the invader to the majesty of the gods. But the restoration of these ruined temples was, it is said, one of the subjects to be discussed by the Panhellenic congress which Perikles was anxious to gather at Athens (p. 36); and as he had issued this invitation, he probably held himself absolved from further adherence to the vow. This edifice now rose to more than its ancient grandeur. But high above all the surrounding buildings towered the mighty fabric of the Parthenon, the home of the virgin goddess, whose colossal image, standing in front of the temple, might be seen by the mariner as he doubled the cape of Sounion.

Public works of Perikles

The exterior of this splendid building is associated most closely with the Panathenaic procession, of which popular fancy has formed some strange ideas. The picture commonly drawn of it exhibits a long array of chariots and horsemen winding through the Propylaia and careering round the Parthenon. But the approach to these great gates, being at an angle of at least twenty degrees, made the ascent, and still more the descent, of vehicles impracticable; and the main entrance was so narrow that the slightest deviation from the path must have done irreparable mischief to the works of art closely ranged on either side. There is no record of a roadway for vehicles, nor is there any sign of a track such as must have been caused by their passage. The horsemen, we must suppose, followed the ship which bore the sacred peplos of the goddess; and this, we are distinctly told, was not carried up the acropolis.

The Parthenon

The worshipper who passed within the massive walls of the Parthenon saw before him a statue of the goddess still more glorious than the one which stood without. It was the work of

the great sculptor whose genius embodied in gold and ivory at Olympia the majesty of Zeus himself. Placed in command of unstinted resources, Pheidias guided the minds of architects some of whom possessed powers not unworthy of being compared with his own. Of most of these men we have but the scantiest knowledge. Mnesikles, Iktinos, Kallikrates, and Alkamenes, are but a few with whom time has dealt more gently than with others once scarcely less illustrious; yet even these to us are little more than a name. Pheidias alone, the mightiest genius of them all, stands forth with greater distinctness; and in the Elgin marbles Englishmen may see the work of his own hands, still instinct with the life imparted to it three-and-twenty centuries ago. But of his greatest achievements, after all the toil of research spent upon them, we know comparatively little. By the confession of those who were familiar with them throughout their lives, the genius of the sculptor has never achieved triumphs so transcendent as those of the chryselephantine statues of Pheidias. The impression left by these marvellous works on the minds of the beholders can never be felt by us; and even the forms and details of their workmanship are for us little more than matters of controversy.

The chryselephantine statues of Pheidias

If, again, it be impossible to realise the effect of these works as separate units, still less can we picture to ourselves the effects produced by them in groups or masses, and still more by their colouring. We may take the one small hillock, scarcely more than nine hundred feet in length, and four hundred in breadth, known as the Athenian acropolis. We may try to recall to our minds its ancient splendours; but do what we will we shall not succeed completely in realising the glory of the gorgeous assemblage of structures which graced the little piece of tableland on its summit, of those superb portals and that majestic flight of steps by which the Panathenaic pomp ascended to the Parthenon; of the sculptures which almost lived and breathed on pediment, and frieze, and metope; of

The Acropolis

the many series of sculptured forms which lined every avenue, while far above all the brazen statue of Athênê kept watch over the city. We have further to take into account, so far as we can, the accessories of this marvellous scene, the brilliancy of sky and sun, the lustrous purity of the marble, the tints of gold and crimson and azure, which imparted depth of light and shade to the mouldings and sculptures of its magnificent temples.

These splendid works involved an outlay which can scarcely have fallen short of three thousand talents. When at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war Perikles summed up the resources of Athens, he stated that the gold on the statue of Athene amounted to forty talents, and that the metal had been so disposed that it might all be taken off whenever it might be wanted. But even if metal had been used which could not be recovered, the outlay had not been made in vain. In his funeral oration Perikles reminded the Athenians that their love of what was beautiful was combined with economy, meaning by this not that they were actuated by a mere wish of saving money, but that, unlike the Spartans, they were accustomed to get money's worth for money; and in this sense it is undoubtedly true that the money spent on the acropolis produced far more than its value. Apart from this, the devotion of so much wealth to the service of the gods was held to be a work which they would assuredly reward; and thus this outlay, guided by a genius which worked its way to every heart, fed the religious sentiment of the Athenians, while throughout Hellas it left an impression of Athenian greatness which would be none the less useful to the imperial city because it may have been vague and disagreeable.

Cost of the public works of Perikles

But if the matter be regarded from the point of view of Perikles, the revenue and the reserved funds of Athens amply justified the outlay, whatever it may have been. So carefully had the resources of the city been administered, and so little had the voracious greediness of the Demos subtracted from them, that Perikles could speak of

Revenues of Athens

the treasury in the acropolis as containing six thousand talents, a sum equal, according to Xenophon, to the whole revenue of Athens for six years, although a sum of 3,700 talents had been spent on the public fortifications and buildings and on works of art.

The embellishment of Athens was, if we look to the growth of the human mind, the greatest, as it certainly was the happiest, task of the life of Perikles; but his time was chiefly occupied in the building up (for he cared little for the extension) of her empire. He found her at the head of an important confederacy, and to him its area seemed already large enough. The object at which he aimed was to strengthen her supremacy within this area, while he opposed generally the efforts made from time to time to widen it. Of the system which sought to consolidate the powers of Athens by means of settlements of Athenians, who under the name of klerouchoi retained their rights as citizens, he altogether approved. This system had already answered well in the Lelantian plan of Euboia; and the measure dealt out to the people of Chalkis in the days of Kleisthenes was now carried out in the territory of Histiaia, as well as in the islands of Lemnos, Imbros, and Skyros. Such a body of settlers was led by Perikles himself to the Thrakian Chersonesos, where he repaired the old wall built by Miltiades across the neck of the peninsula between the cities of Kardia and Paktyê. The extremest point reached by Perikles was Sinope, on the southern shore of the Black Sea. His plan of settling a number of Athenian colonists at this place was furthered by the body of the people who were eager to be rid of their despot Timesilaos.

Aims of the policy of Perikles

Athenian settlements in Euboia and Sinope

He was now to be concerned in matters which, as affecting the future history of Athens, must have caused him deep anxiety. The land empire of Athens had sprung up and died almost with the rapidity of the gourd which is said to grow and to wither away in a single night. The revolt of Samos, B.C. 440, might well

Revolt of Samos, B.C. 440

excite a misgiving of the stability of her maritime supremacy also. We cannot doubt that he carefully considered the whole position, and came to the conclusion that there was no cause for alarm, for to the end of his life his language lost not a jot of its confidence.

Causes of the revolt

He was well aware that this revolt was caused by a feeling of impatience under Athenian ascendency; and it may also be true that he spoke of the relations of Athens with her allies as those of a tyrant with his subjects. Whatever meaning such words may have had in the mouths of others, they meant with him simply that the Athenians must maintain with a strong hand an authority which they could not afford to lay down. But it is not less true (and too great stress can scarcely be laid on the fact) that this radical divergence of feeling was confined for the most part to a small party in the subject cities. That party was indeed always powerful and sometimes preponderant, and it addressed itself invariably to the most deeply seated instinct of the Greek mind, which refused to advance beyond the single city in its conception of a complete society. This feeling pervaded the whole Hellenic world, and led ultimately to its ruin. We cannot therefore pretend that, if this oligarchic party had been absent, there would have been any great enthusiasm for Athens in the minds of her allies, for this ineradicable yearning of the Greeks for the absolute independence of individual cities must excite a dislike for the amount of centralisation indispensable for maintaining any confederacy whatsoever.

Athenian party in the allied cities

But in all these allied or subject cities there was, nevertheless, a class which had not only no positive grievance against Athens, but even a strong community of interest with her; and this class, necessarily, was the demos, or general body of the people, with whom the Eupatrids, so far as it might be possible to do so, would refuse altogether to share their power. So long as there was no opposition between the subject city and its mistress, this demos, or body of the people, remained passive

or indifferent; but when the Eupatrid oligarchy kicked against the yoke or broke out into open rebellion, the demos, or body of the people, not unfrequently took the first opportunity of going over to those whom they knew to be their natural protectors. This fact is strongly insisted on by Diodotos, when in the later revolt of Lesbos Kleon carried a decree for the massacre of the Mitylenaian citizens in a mass; and the argument of Diodotos is that, whereas in every case of revolt Athens might at present count on having the demos strongly in her favour, the indiscriminate punishment of the innocent and the guilty must inevitably convert their friends into enemies.

In this revolt of Samos the action is confined to the oligarchs, or patricians, who had seized upon the Ionian town of Priênê, and defeated the Milesians who opposed them. The latter invoked the aid of Athens; and their part was taken not only by the Athenians, but, as Thucydides tells us with a charming simplicity, by certain of the Samians who wanted to bring about a change in the constitution. These, he tells us soon afterwards, were the demos; and thus we have here, as elsewhere, the conflict between the Athenian and the anti-Athenian parties. The former now became the ruling body in the island, and placed in Lemnos, in the guardianship of the Athenian settlers (p. 48), the hostages which they insisted on taking from the oligarchs.

Anti-Athenian oligarchic party.

But of the Samian oligarchs, not a few refused to submit to the new order of things, and, leaving the island, betook themselves to the Sardian Satrap Pissouthnes. With his help they made their way to Lemnos, stole away the hostages, and delivered over to Pissouthnes the Athenian garrison at Samos. They now made ready to renew the war with Miletos, and the oligarchic faction at Byzantion also struck into the contest. The situation was sufficiently grave. The Samians, who had suggested the transference of the confederate treasury from Delos to Athens (i. 127) were now separated from their alliance. The By-

Revolt of Byzantion.

zantines, who commanded the entrance to the Black Sea, had followed their example. Unless it could be arrested at once, the reaction might spread indefinitely.

Perikles was forthwith placed in command of the fleet of sixty ships sent to reduce the revolted cities, the poet Sophokles being, it is said, one of his nine colleagues. Off the island of Tragia he met and defeated the Samian fleet which was returning to Miletos. The city of Samos was closely invested by land and sea; but as soon as Perikles sailed away to meet the Phenician fleet which was supposed to be advancing along the Karian coast to help the Samians, the latter, by a vigorous sally, broke the besieging lines and remained for some days masters of the sea. The return of Perikles put an end to this passing success. The ships at his command were strengthened by a large reinforcement from Athens and with a contingent from Chios and Lesbos. Feeling their situation desperate, the Samian oligarchs, after a revolt of nine months, made a complete submission, agreeing to raze their walls, surrender their ships, and pay the expenses of the war. Unable to defend themselves single-handed, the Byzantines made peace with Athens and returned to their old subjection. The Phenician fleet, eagerly expected by both Samians and Byzantines, never came; and this fact may perhaps be evidence of the reality of the convention ascribed to Kallias, showing that in spite of his promise Pissouthnes shrank from a formal violation of the compact.

Submission of the Samian and Byzantine oligarchs

So ended a revolt which, by the admission of Thucydides, went far towards endangering the very foundations of the Athenian empire. But although the cost was heavy, the work was effectually done. The return of Perikles to Athens was followed by a solemn funeral ceremony for those who had fallen in the wars. At the close of his oration the women present showered garlands upon him as on a victorious athlete; Elpinike, the sister of Kimon (p. 10), alone, it is said, damping the enthusiasm of the moment by the remark that her brother's triumphs

Triumphant return of Perikles to Athens

had been achieved at the expense of his country's enemies, while those of Perikles were won over her friends. Her statements were not true; but these anecdotes come to us on very slender authority.

From this time to the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, Perikles was occupied chiefly in preparing Athens for a successful conduct of the great struggle which he felt to be inevitable. The few years which intervened made a great change in the political feelings and prepossessions of the Greek world, and especially of some among the Dorian cities. Long ago, in the synod gathered at Sparta to promote the restoration of Hippias (i. 53), the Corinthians had protested against the measure as an unjustifiable interference with the affairs of an independent city. At the congress summoned to consider the request of the Samian oligarchs for help from the Spartans and their allies, they again insisted that every independent or autonomous state had a right to deal as it pleased with its free or its subject allies. In other words, they were still, or spoke as if they were, unconscious of the radical antagonism between the policy of Athens and of all the Dorian cities. By this protest on behalf of Athens, they felt that they were doing Athens a great service, and within a very few years they urged their title to the gratitude of the Athenians for thus interfering on their behalf in a very critical period of their history. But the stream was running in a direction which rendered the continuance of friendly feelings between Athenians and Corinthians impossible; and the baleful principles which marked the Dorism of Sparta, and infected its allies generally, was to produce its bitter fruits in the downfall of the one city which alone could have a chance of counteracting them.

Preparations for the struggle between the Athenian and Corinthian Greeks

Thus far Perikles might well have congratulated himself on the success which had fallen to his lot in the course of his political career. The prospect before Athens on the suppression of the Samian revolt was indeed not so brilliant as that which had lit up the closing years or months of the life

† Ephialtes. That statesman had been smitten down while Athens possessed a land empire scarcely less important than the supremacy which she had acquired at sea; but it was likely that the latter would become even more firmly established when the complications involved in regulating the affairs of the inland states had been removed by the issue of the battle of Koroneia.

Position of Athens in the time of Ephialtes

Since the death of Ephialtes, Athens had been strengthened in every way, for the simple reason that the force imparted to the Athenian character was essentially a moral one. Not only had there been no attempt to fix upon Athenian citizens the iron yoke of Spartan military life and discipline, but a systematic effort had been made to provide for them an intellectual culture which Spartans would have regarded as either enervating or corrupting. We need not forget, we cannot forget, the blacker side of Athenian civilisation. We need not, and we cannot, put out of sight the horror and wretchedness of the accursed system of slavery on which Athenian polity rested. But the curse of slavery was not confined to Athens. If we may judge from the disposition of the Helots and Perioikians (p. 17), the yoke was far more crushing at Sparta, as it certainly was afterwards far more terrible at Rome. Whatever is said in commendation of Athenian freedom, or of anything that is praiseworthy in any state of the ancient world, must always be qualified by a reference to this horrible plague-spot and centre of corruption and death. But in the mystery of the Divine working the thought of Athenian citizens and statesmen was so directed as to exhibit to the world an ideal of freedom in thought, spirit, and action, enjoyed by a minority of the people, which should, as it is now in Great Britain, be realised for the vast majority of the people, and which, we cannot doubt, will in the issue be realised for all.

Freedom and slavery at Athens

This ideal of freedom, so far as it was worked out, was attained through influences of the most varied kinds, through a training which concerned itself with the exercise of every

faculty of mind and body, through the highest education of the eye and ear, and through practical experience in all the business of legislation and self-government. In the working out of this mighty system Perikles was now the master-spirit; but it would be absurd to speak of him as creating the character which he had done so much to form. The notion would be ridiculous if applied even to Themistokles. In fact, both these men were themselves moulded by the influences which they found to be such powerful instruments in the training of their countrymen. Herodotos and Thucydides seem, as historians, to be separated by a vast, if not an impassable, gulf; but on a closer scrutiny we see that the intellectual revolution which shaped the genius of Thucydides was at work also in the earlier writer, and was acquiring continually a stronger impetus. The change which made the career of Themistokles and Perikles possible was being effected before the former appeared on the political stage; and it is enough, even for their glory, to say that, more than all other Athenians, they possessed the power of placing themselves at the head of the movement and of indefinitely increasing its impulse and its volume.

Education of Athenian citizens

If the work and the motives of Perikles were not altogether understood and appreciated by his own contemporaries, they were more seriously misapprehended by many who came after them. Plato represents Sokrates as charging Perikles with making the Athenians effeminate, idle, garrulous, and greedy of money. The reference is chiefly to the payments made out of the public treasury for enabling citizens who could not afford to pay for entrance to have their full enjoyment of the dramatic performances at the greater festivals. These payments were indeed only a part of the yearly state disbursements. The reforms of Ephialtes had fully established the right of the citizens serving as dikasts, or jurymen, to a recompense for their time and labour. Of these reforms (p. 6) Perikles had eagerly approved; and, so far as they were extended in his own time, he pleaded not less fearlessly for the extension.

Payment of public money for entrance to the theatre

The decree which secured to such citizens as might need it the two oboli demanded as the entrance money to the public exhibition of the drama was his work. To him also has been ascribed the measure which assigned pay to citizens serving their country in war. Later legislation may have carried this principle too far, as when it gave pay to citizens for taking part in the debates and business of the public assembly; but for the principle itself Perikles, whether rightly or wrongly, would have contended with all his might. Nor can it be denied that his arguments are always forcible and weighty. A statesman so conservative as Aristeides could insist that the character of the men belonging to the nautic crowd of the Peiraieus entitled them to all the privileges of citizenship (i. 124); and in the same spirit Perikles maintained that all Athenians had a right to all the advantages which could be afforded to them by a right management and expenditure of the public treasure.

Defence of the system by Perikles

That the practice of subsidising poorer citizens on the special ground of their poverty was likely to run into abuses few will venture to deny. In fact, it did so run on; but it did so because it was extended to matters differing widely from those in which Perikles wished to see it working. The dramatic representations of the great Dionysiac festival were strictly religious solemnities; and the exclusion of citizens because they happened to be poor might almost be regarded as an act of impiety to the deities in whose honour they were celebrated. He could further argue that the drama, thus brought before all Athenians, was the most potent instrument in their education for the whole business of life. The plays there acted were works of the highest human genius. The music and power of language could not be carried further than it was carried in their choral odes, which ranged over the whole scale of human emotion, wakening the mind to the subtlest harmonies of form and colour, feeding the sense of beauty with images glorified by the radiance of Hellenic sunshine,

Influence of the drama on the Athenian people

and raising the heart to that holy abode of purity and peace, which is, in the words of Sophokles, the source of the Eternal Law of Righteousness. In the conversations of the actors (for the Greek tragedy was rather a discourse about action than an exhibition of the action itself) they listened to discussions which touched and even went to the root of some of the most momentous questions affecting the interests or the duties of mankind. In short, there was scarcely a problem arising out of the varied circumstances and conflicting duties of human life which was not at the least handled by the Greek tragic poets. In the case of Antigone this duty was represented as impelling her to resist the supreme power of the state; and in that of Prometheus as constraining him to defy the majesty of Zeus himself.

Rhetorical training of Athenian citizens

But for the Athenian citizen the drama was not merely an embodiment of the highest poetic genius. It supplied him with a forensic education which he could nowhere else obtain in the same perfection. The law of Athens at no time allowed the employment of professional advocates. The Athenian might, or he might not, learn by heart speeches written for him by others; but in his own person he must accuse, and in his own person he must plead his own cause, before a court consisting of hundreds or, it may be, thousands of his fellow-citizens. But the very delivery of a speech composed by another and then learnt by heart would be an extremely hard task for one who had no previous rhetorical training. No one could be sure that he should not be called upon either to face an accuser or to bring a charge against a man who had wronged him. In either case, lack of readiness in speech and argument might lead not merely to failure, but to ruin. If an Athenian citizen so failed, he had himself only to blame. As a member of the public assembly (i. 66) he had the privilege of listening to the greatest of human orators; and this invaluable education was supplemented by the tragic drama. In the speeches, whether of accusation, defence, or explanation, which invariably made up the body of Greek tragedy,

he had specimens of carefully considered and finished pleading, in which the arguments were arranged in the modes most sure to persuade and convince the hearer, or to rouse his feelings of indulgence or sympathy for himself and of righteous indignation against his opponents.

Perikles had thus a clearly defined aim in all the measures which he carried or proposed, and this aim was to surround the Athenians with a refinement, a culture, and a wealth of beauty such as should make them regard their city with an affectionate pride and stimulate them to put forth all their strength in her defence. The very fact that they had so much to lose by her downfall would nerve them to an unconquerable resolution in the hour of battle, and they would be conscious that they were fighting for the object of their enlightened love, and not from the merely selfish instinct of the savage or the brute. It was, in truth, an ideal of polity such as, in some points, has at no other time and in no other country been realised; and if we compare it with the state of things in which Spartans and even Corinthians found a dull and dogged satisfaction it becomes astonishing indeed. The record of it has been preserved to us in all that survives of Athenian literature and Athenian art, and it is one from which the thinkers of every age may derive lessons of inestimable value.

General aims of Perikles in dealing with the citizens of Athens

To a certain extent, this many-sided Athenian life went on undisturbed through the miserable and painful controversies and debates which preceded the great struggle between the Ionian and Dorian world; and if it received a rude interruption in the terrible outburst of the plague, and still more in the awful calamity which overtook them at Syracuse, it showed a marvellous power of recovery in the chequered years which witnessed the strength of Athenian perseverance against a merciless enemy aided by implacable traitors, who can only be described as worthy successors of the murderers of Ephialtes.

Vitality of the Athenian constitution.

These debates and controversies carry us far away to the

west; and it might be said that the view there opened to us has little about it that is either edifying or attractive. We must look on men whose quarrels and strifes are much like the battles of kites and crows; but although we may not care to spend much time over them, we cannot put them wholly out of sight if we would really understand the conditions under which the later years of Perikles were passed.

Western Hellas

When, on the suppression of the Samian revolt, the Corinthians took the part of Athens (p. 52), it is quite possible that they may have looked to her for a like kindly office in a case which more immediately concerned themselves. In this there would be nothing discreditable to the Corinthians; and possibly it might have been better for Athens, and therefore better for the world, if her help could have been secured for that one of the Dorian cities which had thus far been the most friendly and the best disposed towards her. As it was, the Athenian alliance was secured for a state whose history is almost from beginning to end horrible and revolting.

Athens and Corinth

A Corinthian colony had found a rich and beautiful home in the fertile island of Korkyra (Corcyra), which faces the magnificent range of the Akrokeraunian mountains. The highlands at the northern end, which have given it its modern name of Korupho (Corfu), subside into a plain country, capable of yielding everywhere abundant harvests of grain and wine. It was an abode which might well have promised a long continuance of peace and wealth; but there sprang up in it one of the most turbulent and ferocious of Greek communities.

The Corinthian colony of Korkyra

The long series of their quarrels began with bickerings and complaints against the mother city, and the early growth and virulence of the feud seems to be attested by the tradition that the first naval battle of the Greeks was fought by the fleets of Korkyra and Corinth. But of the origin of the feud, or of the time at which this battle was fought, we know nothing. The cha-

Quarrels between Corinth and Korkyra

racter of the colony may have been largely affected by fusion with Liburnians, who are said to have been settled in the island before the founding of the city. There may also have been jealousies of trade, which would sufficiently explain the animosity which sprang up between the two states. The Korkyraians had acquired a strip of coast on the mainland, and so were enabled to anticipate the Corinthians in their traffic with the Epeirote tribes.

Korkyraian colony of Epidamnos

On this coast the Korkyraians founded their colony of Epidamnos; and in spite of their ill-will to the Corinthians they felt themselves bound to apply to the mother-city for the man who should be the leader, or Oikistes, of the colony. Corinth had thus certain parental rights over the new colony; but fresh dangers were involved in the fact that an oligarchy ruled at Corinth, while the demos was supreme at Korkyra. Whether the change at Korkyra was effected before or after the founding of Epidamnos we cannot say. If we assign it to the earlier time, it would follow that the Korkyraian oligarchs availed themselves of the opportunity of finding a more congenial home elsewhere, or that colonists who had belonged to the demos in Korkyra formed themselves into an oligarchy at Epidamnos. In a people so notorious as the Korkyraians for political immorality this would be in no way surprising.

Alliance between the Corinthians and the Epidamnians

But whatever may have been the nature of the Epidamnian oligarchy, the oligarchs proved to be no match for the demos. The demos expelled their opponents, and the latter, aided by the rude tribesmen of the mainland, did all the mischief they could to the demos. The latter besought aid from the demos of Korkyra; but they could point, we are told, to no tombs of common ancestors, and this may perhaps mean that they were sprung from a concourse of aliens from many lands. The instinct of the old Aryan civilisation (i. 19) was still too strong in the minds of the Korkyraians to dispense with the blood tie. The petition of the Epidamnians was bluntly rejected; and the latter betook themselves to Corinth, where

their prayer was heard. The haughty Corinthian oligarchs were thus in alliance with the mongrel multitude of an insignificant town; but if the connexion was humiliating, they might console themselves with the prospect which it opened to them of inflicting some severe blows on their ungrateful colony.

A Corinthian army entered Epidamnos, and the appearance of a Korkyraian fleet before the town brought matters perilously near to actual war. Sending envoys to Corinth, the Korkyraians insisted on the withdrawal of the Corinthian forces from Epidamnos, and expressed their willingness to submit the quarrel to arbitration. In reply, the Corinthians refused even to debate the point, unless the siege of Epidamnos should be first raised; and to this the Korkyraians answered that it should be raised if the Corinthians would quit the place, or that, if they would not depart, matters should be left as they were on both sides, a truce being entered into until the arbiters should decide whether Epidamnos should belong to Corinth or to Korkyra.

Quarrel between Corinth and Korkyra about Epidamnos, B.C. 436

By this offer the Korkyraians had beyond doubt put themselves, technically at least, in the right. Their conduct may have been unprincipled and disgraceful; but they had brought the controversy into a form which would have enabled the Corinthians to make up the quarrel without humiliation. By replying to these proposals with an immediate declaration of war, the Corinthians left themselves wholly without excuse; and, if we confine our view to secondary causes, we may fairly fix on them the responsibility of all the miseries which for the next five-and-thirty years befel the whole Hellenic world.

Declaration of war by Corinth against Korkyra

The challenge was given, and the two cities engaged in open strife, which went on for two years without any decisive results. But the Korkyraians became seriously alarmed when the Corinthians began to raise a large mercenary force of seamen from cities belonging to the Athenian confederacy.

It was plain that only an alliance with Athens could enable them to make way against odds which might otherwise be overwhelming. Their envoys therefore hastened to Athens (B.C. 433), and thither also hurried ambassadors from Corinth to take part in one of the most momentous debates in the world's history. For their speeches, as for all others which are introduced into his narrative, we have the declaration of Thucydides that his reports may be taken as representing the general substance and thread of the arguments; and if we so take them, we are driven to the conclusion that not a little assurance was needed before the Korkyraians could put forth their pleas of naked self-interest with any hope that they would be listened to.

Petition of the Korkyraians to be admitted to the Athenian alliance, B.C. 433

Acknowledging candidly that they had kept out of the way when their fleets were sorely needed at Salamis, and that since that time their system of avoiding all alliances had brought them into great and perilous difficulties, they insisted that in spite of this they could make an adequate return for any help which they might receive, their navy being even now second only to that of Athens. But the argument on which they most relied was one which had no immediate reference to the quarrel between Korkyra and her mother-city. The crisis was immeasurably more serious. A conflict between the two great Greek confederacies was imminent, and if the Athenians fancied that it was not, they were cheating themselves with the wildest of dreams. The Corinthians were perfectly well aware of what was coming, and their operations against Korkyra aimed only at the disarming of an enemy who might be too formidable in the impending struggle.

Arguments of the Korkyraians

The reply of the Corinthians was not without force and weight on every point except that of the arbitration offered by their opponents. Their rejection of it was unjustifiable, and they could only shuffle out of the difficulty by declaring that the arbitration came too late, and that it should have been offered before the

Counter-arguments of the Corinthians

blockade of Epidamnos. This plea could be admitted only if arbitration were defined to be a means for preventing the commission of wrongs rather than of redressing them when committed. But in speaking of the habits of the Korkyraians as showing a marked predilection for piracy and plunder, they were perhaps severe, but probably not far wrong. Anxiety to keep the fruits of their robberies to themselves would amply explain the policy which held aloof from all alliances. But the particular alliance into which they were now tempting the Athenians must involve a direct breach of the terms of the thirty years' truce, which were never intended to apply to states which sought admission into one confederacy for the deliberate purpose of injuring a city belonging to the other. With even more force they appealed to their own conduct as showing a friendly spirit towards Athens. They had aided her in the war with Egina, and they had protested against the bestowal of any help on the revolted Samians on the express ground that there ought to be no interference between an imperial city and her free or subject allies. They asked no more than that the Athenians should act in accordance with the same principle.

Perikles turns the scale in favour of a defensive alliance with Korkyra

For two days this momentous question, which would now be reserved for the decision of the sovereign or of the executive government, was debated in the general assembly of Athenian citizens. It was plain to all that an offensive alliance with the Korkyraians could be entered into only if they were prepared to break the truce—which they would be compelled to do—if their new allies should summon them to attack Corinth or any of her possessions. There remained, however, the alternative of a strictly defensive alliance, and this seemed to commend itself to them on the mere ground of prudence. To allow a navy second only to their own to be absorbed by a hostile confederacy would be gross and most culpable folly; but the defensive alliance might weaken both Corinthians and Korkyraians alike. In spite of these inducements, the assembly, anxious to keep the peace as the first of

all considerations, was inclined to reject the alliance. The scale was turned by Perikles, who saw more clearly than the Korkyraians themselves that the struggle with Sparta could not be long postponed. Korkyra was admitted into alliance; but a fleet of only ten ships was sent under the command of Lakedaimonios, the son of Kimon, the small number being intended not, as Plutarch supposed, by way of expressing the jealousy felt by Perikles for the family of Kimon, but to show that no aggressive measures would be attempted against the Corinthians.

In taking this course the Athenians were virtually attempting to walk on the edge of a razor. It was not likely that the Corinthians would lose time in bringing matters to an issue. Their fleet encountered that of the Korkyraians off the islets of Sybota, and had almost succeeded in inflicting on it a decisive defeat, when the Athenian vessels dashed into the fight and came into open conflict with the Corinthians. On the next day the latter, anxious to know what the Athenians might purpose to do, asked if they designed to break the truce by preventing them from going to Korkyra or in any other direction. They were told that they might go whither they would, so long as they kept away from Korkyra or from any settlements belonging to her. Inferring from this that they might sail home unmolested, they eagerly availed themselves of the permission, taking with them two hundred and fifty Korkyraian prisoners. These they treated with the utmost kindness, not so much because they expected them to pay a heavy ransom, as because they hoped to use them as instruments for putting down the Korkyraian demos, and so bringing the island into hearty alliance with Corinth. These men returned home to stir up the most savage seditions known in the history of any Greek cities.

Battle off the islands of Sybota, B.C. 432

It may be said that with an amount of forbearance such as European states of the present day may fairly be expected to exercise, the Peloponnesian war might have been avoided; and the more we allow ourselves to be influenced by this

thought, the more shall we regret that Perikles could not see his way towards counteracting the plans of the Corinthians without implicating Athens in the misdeeds of the Korkyraians. But if we look to the conditions and tendencies of Greek society, and more especially if we take the full measure of the principles which underlie such a polity as that of Sparta, we shall see that the struggle was really inevitable, and so seeing we shall hold that Perikles had nothing to regret in the advice which he gave about the proposals of the Korkyraians. Accidents had twice led the Corinthians to confer a real benefit on Athens; but at bottom there could be no harmony between the two cities, and the divergence between them was brought out still more prominently by the conduct of the Corinthians in reference to their own colony of Potidaia. This city was now a tributary ally of Athens, although it still received annually from Corinth magistrates called Epidemiourgoi.

Effects of the alliance between Athens and Korkyra

The growing enmity of the Corinthians made the Athenians doubly anxious in a case where the latter had enemies close at hand, with whom the Corinthians might make common cause. Whatever may be said of the professions made by the Makedonian chief Alexandros to the Athenian generals at Plataia (i. 121), there is no doubt that with his son Perdikkas hatred of his brother Philip and of Philip's ally, Derdas, was a far more powerful motive than friendship for Athens; and when these chiefs became allies of the imperial city, Perdikkas began to work with the distinct purpose of bringing about the revolt of Potidaia, and of getting the Spartans to invade Attica while he stirred up the seeds of rebellion against Athens in the cities along the northern shores of the Egean.

Dangers for Athens in the Thrace-ward regions

The strain was now becoming great in every direction. With little hope of success, the Potidaians sent to Athens an embassy, asking for a remission of the sentence which ordered them to throw down their seaward walls and give hostages for their good behaviour. With

Revolt of Potidaia

greater confidence another mission was at the same time sent to Sparta, where they were assured that any attack on Potidaia should be followed by an immediate invasion of Attica. Thus was Sparta once again pledged to open war with Athens, without giving the latter any warning of the engagements entered into. This assurance made the Potidaians determine on immediate revolt; and their example was followed by others, who dismantled their settlements and accepted the invitation of Perdikkas to establish themselves at Olynthos. Against this combined opposition the Athenian general then on the coast could do little until he had received reinforcements; and the Corinthians availed themselves eagerly of the opportunity for strengthening their force in Potidaia, which was thus enabled to stand out for two years. Before it was reduced to submission, the fatal war which was to end in the ruin of Athens had already begun.

Injury done to Athens by the revolt of Megara

Events were moving rapidly. Far from intervening, as they had done (p. 52), on the side of Athens, the Corinthians were doing all that they could to hurry Sparta into war; and fresh fuel was added to the fire by the treatment of Megara by Athens, and by the protests of the Megarians against it. The alliance of Megara had been a vast benefit to the Athenians. It had given them possession of the highway into the Peloponnesos, and made a Spartan invasion of Attica a matter not worth consideration. Her renouncement of the alliance was the death-knell of the land empire of Athens; and the indignation of the Athenians was proportioned to the severity of the blow thus dealt out to them. There was no need to wait long for opportunities of retaliation. Two grounds of complaint were found, each of which, according to the ideas of the ancient world, would justify any measures which it might be practicable to take. The Megarians had tilled the common or neutral ground between the territories of the two states and also the pasture land which was sacred to the Eleusinian goddesses, unless, indeed, as some have contended, the sacred

ground and the border land were the same thing under different names. The second charge was concerned with the abduction or the escape of slaves from Athens.

For these offences the Athenians passed a decree excluding the Megarians from all Athenian ports; and the Megarians in furious anger complained of the decree at Sparta as a palpable breach of the truce. The carrying of such a complaint to Sparta of all places was absurd. Sparta never scrupled to banish strangers summarily at her will; and the morality of the ancient world had nowhere reached a stage in which it could profess to be shocked by acts not in accordance with modern notions of free trade.

Decree excluding the Megarians from Athenian ports

It is quite possible that both these grounds of offence may have been given. It is not so easy to ascertain the form in which each offence was committed. According to Aristophanes, the slaves, two only in number, were stolen, and they were stolen from Aspasia, the woman whom Perikles would have made his wife if he could. In the narrative of Thucydides the slaves, seemingly in much larger numbers, escape from Athens and find a refuge in Megara. It needs the ingenuity of the most resolute biblical commentators to reconcile such discrepancies as these; nor can we suppose that the deliberate stealing away or abduction of two women, of the class to which these are said to have belonged, was an incident likely to rouse much, or any, attention at Athens. The giving an asylum to runaway slaves was a much more serious matter, which the Athenians regarded with a natural dread, and from which they suffered most severely when, after the catastrophe in Sicily, the Spartans established their garrison at Dekeleia.

Charges brought against the Megarians

Whatever the facts may have been, they were used by the opponents of Perikles as a convenient instrument for aspersing his private character. The account of Thucydides is plain and straightforward, and leaves no room for the slanders uttered against the great Athenian statesman. We are but scantly justified, there-

Version of Pausanias

fore, in preferring to his story the version of Pausanias, that the Megarians killed a herald named Anthemokritos. This name is not mentioned by Thucydides, who says nothing about the slaying of any herald. The belief that this crime was committed existed in the days of the orator Demosthenes; but how or when it took shape we cannot say. Yet, if the fact had been proved in the days of Perikles, it is to the last degree unlikely that it should have been kept in the background or passed over in silence, and that Thucydides should, in place of the true, substitute a false reason for the decree of exclusion.

Charges and slanders of the comic poets against Perikles

The insinuations or calumnies of Aristophanes carry us into another world—the world of malignant gossip, which is supposed to be mirrored in the so-called society papers of the present day. At no time, seemingly, is there any lack of persons who take a pleasure in ascribing great political movements to the workings of the appetites and passions of individuals. The Trojan war was a war for the adulterous Helen; the Peloponnesian war, stretching over thrice as long a period, filled the Greek world with bloodshed and misery for the sake of Aspasia and of women altogether worse than Aspasia. Such is the charge of Aristophanes, and it is put plainly enough. Some Athenians, he affirms, stole from Megara an Hetaira named Simaitha; and in retaliation the Megarians stole from Athens two of the women from whose degradation Aspasia derived an infamous revenue. In his Olympian rage at these reprisals Perikles, we are told, flashed his lightnings and hurled his thunderbolts, in the shape of decrees excommunicating the Megarians by bell, book, and candle. Plutarch, who repeats this story, obtained it probably from the great comic poet; but statements made chiefly and especially to amuse an audience cannot safely be taken as trustworthy evidence, when we come to sit in judgment on the characters of public men.

It is just possible that the private life of Perikles may have been worse than Aristophanes has painted it; but it is as

clear as day that in a city like Athens he had no means of shaping the course of public affairs except through the debates and decisions of the general assembly of the citizens; and large masses of men, not in bondage to a feudal or despotic system, can be influenced only by reasons which may seem to them to justify prompt and vigorous action. It is ludicrous to suppose that, if the reasons assigned by Aristophanes had been the true and the only causes urged for the passing of the decree, the Athenians would have taken the question into serious consideration. But the decree was, we know, both passed and acted upon, and therefore we must look for the cause elsewhere.

Value of the assertions of comic poets

The last thing which we have any right to do is to turn round on Thucydides and charge him with writing a defective history because he says nothing of matters which are paraded in the front ground by comic poets. There seems to be for some a satisfaction in placing writers who ascribe the movements of nations to personal and private motives above historians who speak as though the world's fortunes turn on somewhat larger hinges; and it has been urged that the pictures given of Perikles by Aristophanes should be accepted as true just because they are so very different from the impression left by the narrative of Thucydides. The former represent him as concealing under his cold and reserved manner the disposition of a selfish sensualist, led away by any who would pander to his vices. The comic poets spoke of the Peloponnesian war as being brought about not through any dispute relating to Korkyra and Potidaia, but by a much smaller and meaner one, which affected the interests not of nations, but of one individual, Aspasia. They represented Perikles as besotted by her charms. They were eager to declare that when he defended her he was moved as he was moved but once again in his life; and it was also said that the man with whom she allied herself after the death of Perikles became from this very fact one of the leaders of the state.

Historians and comic poets

Without saying anything of the motives which may have

influenced Perikles, his whole policy, it may be said without fear of contradiction, was from first to last clear, definite, and unswerving. The ideas with which he started he worked out resolutely and consistently to the end. There is not the faintest shadow of reason for thinking that he was led astray against his better judgement by Aspasia or by anyone else; and we have not a jot more ground for saying that the mind of Aspasia was so exalted as to suggest to Perikles the policy to which he personally adhered. She could not have done so, for the simple reason that the lines of this policy were all drawn out before he became acquainted with her. The other arguments in support of this charge scarcely call for notice. The agitation of Perikles in defending Aspasia was remarkable only because it was Perikles who was agitated. The Athenian jurymen were habituated to such scenes, and counted upon seeing them. The marriage or union of Aspasia with Lysikles seems to rest on no better authority than that of Aristophanes; but if Aspasia made him, as it is alleged, one of the foremost leaders of the state, then it must be admitted that he was a leader who fulfilled his duty by doing nothing.

Character of the policy of Perikles

We may smile at the caricatures thus presented to us; but the general question is a very serious one. This question is, whether we are to look to comic poets in any age for true estimates of the men whom they hold up to ridicule for the amusement of their hearers; whether, for instance, we shall be even on the road towards the truth if we assign to the Aristophanic picture of Sokrates a value beyond that of the portraits drawn of him by Xenophon and Plato. The question is not whether Sokrates was or was not a poor philosopher, following a mistaken method, but whether he was the absent-minded star-gazer which Aristophanes asserts him to have been. As it so happens, we know that this description of him is the very reverse of the truth; and, indeed, not many delusions have been more mischievous than the notion that the statements of comic poets are to be taken seriously as representing

Tests for determining the value of comic portraits

the real facts of the time, unless we have actual testimony to outweigh them. It would be far safer to lay it down as a general rule that they may in all cases be rejected, except where we have positive collateral testimony in their favour.

Aristophanic pictures of Perikles and Sokrates

Without the slightest authority, the comic poets of Athens have been paraded before English readers as conscientious teachers of a disinterested morality, who in the midst of a hard and corrupt generation adopted the only means by which they could hope to win the public ear. It has thus come to be supposed that when Aristophanes says anything about Perikles, Sokrates, or any other prominent citizen, he is, in the absence of direct proof to the contrary, to be believed. With far greater reason we may say that, apart from the clearest corroborative testimony, he is not to be believed. It has been well said that the comic poets were never regarded at Athens in the light in which they are presented to us by modern criticism. The judgement passed by Aristophanes on Sokrates is treated with contemptuous silence by Cicero, who describes the system of the great philosopher in terms diametrically contradicting the libels of the Athenian comic stage. If the Aristophanic picture of Sokrates is to be put aside as worth little or nothing, we cannot attach more worth to what Aristophanes tells us of Perikles. In fact, these things are the mere work of scandal-mongers, and if we give credence to such tales, we may easily bring ourselves to believe that all men are filthy, and all the purposes of life ridiculous; but we shall scarcely succeed in taking that broad and impartial view which shall assign to each set of causes its own proportionate value.

Disposition of Athens towards Sparta

Few, after the revolt of Potidaia, could have entertained any confident hope that peace between Athens and Sparta—in other words, between the two great confederacies of the Ionian and Dorian races respectively—could be long maintained. There could be no mistake as to the disposition of the two parties. Athens had no intention of pushing on the struggle, and no motive for so doing. Her opponents had every possible inducement for

aggression; for only by a direct and unsparing attack could they hope to arrest the progress of principles which, if not summarily checked, must in the end subvert the foundations of Spartan and Dorian polity.

But although they were eager to strike the blow, they were not yet prepared to do so; and as, beyond all doubt, the master-spirit in the camp of the enemy was Perikles, every effort must, in the mean season, be made to neutralise his influence and even to bring about his ruin and banishment. With the expulsion or the silencing of the great leader of the demos the old patrician party might regain its old ascendency, and the struggle with Sparta might be avoided by surrendering everything in the constitution of Athens to which Eupatrid feeling and fancy might take objection. The oligarchs of Athens and the peers of Sparta were, indeed, in hearty agreement. Perikles must be put down at all risks and all costs; and perhaps the easiest way of putting him down might be found in an appeal to the religious fears and superstitions of all ranks and classes in the state.

Efforts to bring about the downfall of Perikles, B.C. 431

For all practical purposes the Athenians were aware of the course which things were taking at Sparta. Their own envoys, who happened to be present on other business, were able to tell them of what had passed in the meeting of the Peloponnesian allies, in which they themselves took part. The formal congress which followed this debate sat with closed doors; but the tenor of the speeches made at the first assembly left little doubt of the issue of the second. This second council resolved on war, but no formal declaration had been sent to Athens when the first effort was made to get rid of Perikles.

Assembly of allies and formal congress at Sparta

Indeed, no declaration of war was ever sent to Athens at all; but the adherents of Perikles knew quite well what was meant when a demand came from Sparta that they should drive out the curse of Kylon (i. 13). This curse lay as an hereditary burden on the Alkmaionid family, and with this family Perikles was connected (p. 29).

Spartan appeal to the curse of Kylon

The curse, therefore, could be wiped out only by his banishment. This demand was easily evaded by the answer that the Athenians would do as the Spartans wished, if the latter would first drive out the double curse of Tainaron, a curse which rested on it for the murder of some Helots who had taken sanctuary in the temple of Poseidon, and for the removal of Pausanias from that of Athênê of the Brazen House.

Further demands of the Spartans

The second demand came nearer to the question really at issue. The Spartans insisted that the blockade of Potidaia should be raised, that Egina should be left independent, and that the decree excluding the Megarians from Athenian ports should be withdrawn. Of these requests the first two were peremptorily refused; to the third the reply was a simple statement of the charges which the Athenians brought against their former ally. A third embassy brought the still more sweeping demand that all the Greek cities now belonging to the Athenian confederacy should be, and be declared, autonomous and independent.

Meaning of these demands

This was, in truth, calling upon Athens to surrender everything, by wiping out the history of the last half century. It was well to have the long dispute brought to a point. The Spartans, in sending this ultimatum, as it would be called in the language of modern diplomacy, expressed their wish for the maintenance of peace on this one indispensable condition; and the general assembly of Athenian citizens met once for all to determine how they should deal with men who virtually declared themselves their enemies. The vast majority must have felt that the maintenance of peace was hopeless; but some, it seems, still clung to the notion that the expression of a readiness to withdraw the Megarian decree might lead to a change of position on the part of their opponents; nor can there be any doubt that the Spartans laid stress on this subordinate matter because they knew that in it they could most count on the support of the oligarchic party at Athens. The latter accordingly urged that this decree at all events ought not to be allowed to stand in the way of reconciliation.

In the speech which determined the issue of the debate Perikles declared his unshaken conviction that, far from removing the risk of war, the withdrawal of the decree would have not the smallest effect on the controversy. The Spartans had steadily refused to submit the questions in dispute to arbitration, and the demands now made were put forth simply in the temper of a bully who wishes to find out how far he may go with impunity. Sparta was not more than the equal of Athens; and to submit to her dictation, even on a subordinate or insignificant point, would be virtually an unconditional surrender. To Athenians the dignity of their city should be an ever-present consideration; and therefore now, with the earnestness which he had always shown in treating this matter, he reminded them of the essential differences between the political system of Sparta and their own. The centralised empire of Athens could turn all its forces at will in any direction; the Spartan confederacy was a gathering of units without any cohesion, and with no common action beyond that which was suggested by the fancy or the desire of the moment. The Athenian power might safely disregard the clamour of a dissentient minority; with the Spartans, lack of harmony meant the paralysis of all action. The Spartans, again, with their allies, depended almost wholly on the cultivation of their territories, and were without the reserved funds which were indispensable for the carrying on of long wars. They might, perhaps, threaten to establish a hostile settlement on Attic ground; but such a settlement would probably suffer more harm than it could inflict.

Speech of Perikles

On this one point the history of the Peloponnesian war falsified the expectations of Perikles; but he could speak with greater authority on the insuperable difficulties which the Spartans and their allies would experience in improving their method of naval warfare so long as Athens retained her maritime supremacy. If, again, their enemies should attempt to enrol a force of mercenaries with such resources as they might obtain from

The power and resources of Athens

the treasures of Olympia and Delphoi, the bait held out would attract men who, as belonging to the Athenian confederacy, could not fail to know that the imperial city could and would smite severely. Against the invasion, and even against the devastation, of Attica he could promise them no immunity. The country, whose richness and splendid cultivation were the delight and pride of its owners, might be ravaged and left desolate. Attica was, unhappily, not an island, and to such risks they must remain liable. But though such accidents might be a heavy strain on their powers of endurance, Athens herself did not depend either upon these lands or their produce. From her colonies and allies she could more than supply all her wants, while her fleets, sweeping down on the Peloponnesian coasts, would devastate districts, the ravaging of which would involve immeasurably more serious consequences for their inhabitants. So clearly, indeed, had Athens in this respect the vantage over her enemies, that he would suggest a course which might altogether disconcert them. If they followed his advice, the owners of these lands would themselves leave them stripped and bare before the arrival of a Spartan army, which would thus be made to see that the loss of crops and of farm buildings would in no way affect the character or issue of the struggle.

But great and legitimate though his confidence might be, Perikles was to the last most careful that no provocation should come from Athens; and by his advice an answer, conspicuous for its moderation as well as its dignity, was returned to all the Spartan demands. This answer reminded the Spartans of the power exercised by their ephors in expelling strangers from Sparta at their will and without giving any reason for their sentence. The exclusion of the Megarians from Athenian ports was an act of precisely the same kind. If the Spartans would give up these Xenelasiai, or expulsions of strangers, the decree against the Megarians should also be withdrawn. The allies of Athens should, moreover, be left free, or autonomous if

Answer to the Spartan demands

they were such at the time when the Thirty Years' Truce began, and also if the Spartans would give to their own allies the power of settling their internal affairs after their fancy. Lastly, Athens was as ready now as she had been to submit the whole dispute to the judgement of arbiters approved by both the cities.

Moderation and justice of the answer

So had Perikles brought Athens through a most momentous crisis, without compromising her dignity, or giving her opponents advantage over her on any point, or in any way precipitating a struggle which on every ground he would have avoided if it had been possible to do so. What he felt sure of was that, by yielding to the Spartan demands, Athens would paralyse herself and would have to face the arbitrament of arms after all. The clearness with which he perceived this made him doubly indignant at the onesidedness with which Sparta denied to Athens a liberty of action far less than that which she exercised herself. The influence of Athens was, of necessity, thrown into the scale on the side of democracy. Any other notion would be absurd. But it is obvious that the form of government which was most to her liking could be maintained only where it fell in with the desires of the main body of the people. This could not be said of Sparta; and it was nothing less than monstrous that Sparta should be enabled to force one particular system on all cities of her alliance, whether they liked it or not, and that Athens should be debarred from exercising over her allies even that amount of authority which, without interfering with their internal affairs, was needed for keeping her confederation together at all.

Plutarch's story of Drakontides

During this crisis, Perikles had displayed an astonishing energy in preparing to meet a conflict which could not fail to be terrible in its course, though it might be, and though he felt that, if his counsel were followed, it would be, happy in its close. But it is even more astonishing that he should have exhibited this generous and unselfish patriotism in spite of personal wrongs not

easily to be forgiven or forgotten. There is no ground whatever for questioning the emphatic statement of Thucydides that his own integrity was unassailable; and therefore we may at once set aside the story told by Plutarch that Drakontides put him, or proposed to put him, on his trial for embezzlement of public moneys. Of the result of the trial he says nothing. If he was really brought before the Dikastery, he must have been acquitted; but Thucydides assuredly could never have ventured to speak, as he has spoken, of the incorruptibility of Perikles if he knew that such a charge had been brought against him. The version of Diodoros represents Perikles as hurrying the Athenians into war by the advice of Alkibiades, who, when Perikles expressed his misgivings about his account of moneys shortly to be made to the people, suggested that he should devise some means for not making it at all. These conflicting stories prove that we are dealing simply with the gossip of the day; and as it so happens, even Aristophanes himself treats the notion that Perikles 'blew up the war' from such personal motives as mere talk, which must be taken for what it may be worth. But, indeed, the whole history, if it proves anything at all, proves that neither Perikles nor the Megarian decree was in any way the cause of the war.

Version of Diodoros

That the efforts made to crush him, and, this failing, to harass him to death were persistent and strong there is not the least doubt. Few men whose conduct left no room for hostile or criminal charges have been subjected to so much indirect persecution through those whom they may have honoured or loved. Perikles, his adversaries saw clearly, could be attacked most successfully, if the blows were aimed professedly at his friends—the philosopher Anaxagoras, the rhetorician Damon, the sculptor Pheidias, and the Hetaira Aspasia.

Persecution of the friends of Perikles

Of the first of these, we are told that his doctrines had excited among the people vague feelings of suspicion and dislike; that he was tried twice—first for impiety, then for

Medism; that on his first trial, which was urged on with special zeal by the antagonists of Perikles, the influence of the latter obtained a verdict which punished him with fine and exile instead of death; and, lastly, that when at Lampsakos he was found to be engaged in a treasonable correspondence with the Persian Government, he was sentenced to death. The tradition which records this fact adds that the sentence was not carried out; but the stories relating to his last years are so inconsistent that we cannot safely infer from them anything beyond the facts of his prosecution and his exile. This uncertainty has led some to think that even Perikles shrank from running counter to the public feeling at Athens when this feeling was roused by real or alleged attacks on the received religious dogmas, and that he therefore prevailed on Anaxagoras to leave Athens before his trial came on. It has led others to the conclusion that the desire to lessen the influence of Perikles was not the motive for the prosecution of the philosopher, and that the supposition belongs rather to the ingenuity of modern scholarship than to the sober facts of history. Whatever the notion may be worth, it is certainly not confined to modern writers.

Trial and banishment of Anaxagoras

The question to be answered is whether, apart from his connexion with Perikles, the doctrines of Anaxagoras would have attracted sufficient attention to make it worth while to bring him to trial; and this is one of the many points relating to the history of bygone ages on which we cannot speak positively. There is no doubt that his doctrine of Nous, or Intelligence, as shaping the universe, might be taken as affirming the government of the Kosmos by fixed laws, and would be highly offensive to the theological sentiment of a people who do not trouble themselves to remember that laws imply a lawgiver and can be only the expression of his will. But to the people generally his language could carry with it no sharp and definite meaning. How then could their passions be roused against such a teacher, unless it were shown that his teaching was sanctioned

Doctrines of Anaxagoras

by an authority which could not fail to make it potent for mischief? It is unnecessary to say that the case of Sokrates was wholly different.

Trial and condemnation of Pheidias

The blow aimed at Pheidias seems to have fallen with greater force; but it is strange that here, too, although the facts of gross injustice and malignant persecution are abundantly clear, the results are by no means so well proved. The story runs that when the great sculptor returned to Athens, after finishing his magnificent chryselephantine statue of Zeus at Olympia, he was thrown into prison on the charge of defrauding the public, and that he died there before the time of his trial came. It was further said that he was poisoned by the enemies of Perikles in order that the latter might be supposed to have murdered him. It is said that he underwent two trials, or at all events that he was tried on two several charges, the one of peculation, the other of impiety. The Athenians were asked to believe that Pheidias had stolen some part of the gold entrusted to him for the works on the acropolis; and the accusation, we are told, was triumphantly met by Perikles, who informed them that by his order the gold had been so put on that it might all be easily taken off and weighed. He dared the accusers to demand this verification; but they, it is added, shrank from the challenge, and contented themselves with urging the other charge, which represents Pheidias as having introduced portraits of himself and of Perikles on the friezes of the Parthenon. As we are not told that the portraits were marked by names which might identify them to future generations, it is not easy to understand how even the sensibilities of the Athenian people could be roused by so shadowy an offence. But the fears of the superstitious seem to be unfathomable, and this may perhaps throw some light on incidents which otherwise appear past comprehension.

Of the causes which led to the banishment of Damon we can scarcely be said to know anything. Of the trial of Aspasia, on the other hand, we may safely say that it brings before us some of the most horrible aspects of Athenian

life and society. Perikles had married the divorced wife of Hipponikos, who belonged to the family which had the here-

Trial of Aspasia

ditary right of being torch-bearers at the Eleusinian festival (p. 24). What her name and her parentage may have been we do not know; but we may conclude that one of the Eleusinian Dadouchoi would not ally himself with a woman greatly inferior to himself in rank. Of her married life with Hipponikos we can say nothing. With Perikles she lived unhappily; and the feeling of weariness, if not of disgust, for which she is not perhaps altogether to blame, no doubt left him especially open to the influences of a woman so commanding in intellect and so brilliant in person as Aspasia, the daughter of the Milesian Axiochos. To her society he seems to have turned with intense relief from the horrible monotony of what was called his home; and the causes which led to this (and not in his case only) point to a malady which has its origin in the first principles of Aryan civilisation.

The absolute subjection of the members of a household to the father of the family as its priest and its king may be

Position of women at Athens

a necessity in primitive conditions of society, but it is a prolific source of great and abiding evil. From this root sprang the institutions of caste and of slavery, and the subservience and (sooner or later) the degradation of women. At Rome the husband, in whose power or hand the wife was placed, made her in some degree his companion and the mistress of his household, as well as the mother of his children. At Athens, from a very early age, there must have been a tendency to shut up women belonging to free Athenian families. This custom insured the degradation of the whole class which alone could furnish legitimate wives by Athenian law for Athenian citizens, so that long, probably, before the days of Perikles the home life of Athens, if so it may be called, had come to be little better than that of a Turkish harem.

The result was frightful in two ways. It fostered the horrible and disgusting sentiment which threw a halo over

unnatural vice and crime, and it drove even the best class of citizens to the society of Hetairai for that companionship which they could not hope to find in their legitimate wives. Often gifted with powers of mind far beyond even the conspicuous graces of their persons, these Hetairai knew that if they could please the most highly educated and the most refined men of their time they needed to fear no rivals in the poor creatures who were their wives. The saddest feature in the conversation of Sokrates with the Hetaira Theodotê is the fact that he would not have thought it worth while to bestow the counsel which he gives her either on his own wife or on the wife of any other man. To counsel the wife of Perikles to throw herself into his mind, to enter into his work, to rejoice in his success, and to sympathise in his failures, would have been a ridiculous task indeed. The wife cannot be the companion of her husband unless she can be mentally his equal. Such an equal Perikles found in Aspasia, and the result was the dissolution of his marriage with the mother of his sons Xanthippos and Paralos.

Consequences of the shutting up of free Athenian women

But although the wife of Perikles became the wife of another, Aspasia, as not being the daughter of an Athenian citizen, could not become the wife of Perikles. As his associate for the rest of his life, she became a mark for the slanderous jests of comic poets, one of whom brought against her the ludicrous charge of complicity with Anaxagoras in attempts to corrupt the youth of Athens and to undermine the faith of the people. With this was joined the accusation of pandering to the personal vices of Perikles, and of carrying on the disgraceful traffic which is said to have hurried on, if it did not bring about, the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war (p. 67). On these charges she was put upon her trial; and if in no other case, yet in this, Perikles must have felt a misgiving that the ease with which such accusations were brought was an ominous sign for the future healthiness of Athenian society. So far as we may judge from the vague and inconsistent statements which have come

Charges brought against Aspasia

down to us, the evidence was worth very little; and in this instance he was able to secure a verdict of acquittal.

That these malignant attacks on some of the dearest as well as the most illustrious of his friends should have failed to stir up bitter feelings in his heart is of course impossible. He must, however, have seen from what quarters they came, and therefore have measured them at their true value; and so long as he felt that they were not approved by the main body of the people he was content. But we must surely understand better the fulness with which Athens satisfied the highest aspirations of her most gifted citizens, when we find that this sedulous persecution in no way lessened the single-minded generosity with which he strove to further the interests of his country.

Feelings of Perikles under these attacks

With such a man as Perikles we may fairly say that Athens could not have satisfied them, if devotion to her service had involved the sacrifice of truth. That truth was sacrificed both by Spartans and Corinthians we have seen already, and we shall see many times again; but it may be safely said that we can detect no actual wrongs done by Athens to the Peloponnesian confederacy, nor can we ascribe to her the shuffling and unworthy evasions of her adversaries. No evidence whatever is forthcoming to show that she ever had a thought of reducing Sparta or her confederate cities to the condition of her own subject allies; whereas almost from the day of the battle of Plataia, Sparta had striven to make Athens defenceless (i. 122). If the peace was broken, it was broken not by Athens but by Corinth, whose conduct in reference to the revolt of Potidaia was a direct breach of the Thirty Years' Truce. In short, in all the incidents which served as pretexts for the war Athens was absolutely free from blame.

Athens not chargeable with the war

Nor can we lay too great stress on the fact that eight years later, after the disaster of Sphakteria, the Spartans themselves fully admitted this. Indeed, it might with more reason be said that in her strict moderation Athens went too far, and that for this Perikles was to blame. Sparta, as we

have seen, had promised repeatedly to aid the enemies of Athens, if she could; and one of these promises was actually made while an Athenian force was helping her against the revolted Helots (p. 17). Athens had been guilty of no such double-dealing towards Sparta; but after the formal congress of Spartan allies she might have dealt a formidable if not a fatal blow against her confederacy, without danger or even risk to herself. By the advice of Perikles she refused to avail herself of the opportunity.

Extreme moderation of the Athenians

The striking of such a blow might have been a slight formal wrong, inasmuch as the Spartans had not sent a formal declaration of war to Athens. But virtually the Athenians were as well aware of what had happened in the Spartan congress as if they had received formal notice of it from the lips of a herald. The difference between them was this: that Sparta was not ready for the war to which she had committed herself, and that Athens was fully prepared. In the months which passed before any overt action was taken the fleets of Athens might have ravaged all the fertile lands along the enemy's coasts, and more especially they might have taken on Megara a revenge altogether more terrible than a decree of commercial excommunication. During all these months the Athenians remained steadily passive. It is absurd to suppose that their inactivity is due to any other cause than their determination to remain in the right; and their resolution it is not less certain came from Perikles.

This moderation owing to Perikles

The struggle was precipitated, we are told, by a sudden and wholly unexpected attack on Plataia by the Thebans. This little city had been now for eighty years in the closest alliance with Athens. It had sent its citizens to fight along with Miltiades at Marathon (i. 102); and for their bravery at the battle which destroyed the army of Mardonios they were declared autonomous, or free of all connexion with the Boiotian confederacy (i. 123). But even here, in the little town which for

Attack on Plataia by the Thebans

nigh three generations had held itself aloof from all relations with Thebes, an oligarchic minority was on the watch for any opportunity of detaching the city from the Athenian alliance. These men, headed by Naukleides, arranged their conspiracy with the aid of some of the most powerful Theban families. The plot was carried out, we are told, on a dark and rainy night; and the citizens of Plataia were roused from their sleep, seemingly between nine and ten o'clock, by the noise of a Theban force marching into the town, and by the voice of a herald inciting them to take their stand by the side of their ancient allies according to the good old Boiotian customs.

Resistance of the Plataian demos

The Plataians distinctly understood this as a charge to renounce the alliance with Athens. It could, indeed, have no other meaning; and believing at the moment that resistance must be hopeless, the chief men of the town accepted these terms. They had scarcely done so when the scanty number of the invading force was discovered; and the Plataian demos, indignant at the agreement thus made for them, set to work to barricade the streets with vehicles, and then, by piercing through the internal walls of their houses, to insure the means of combined action without rousing the suspicion of the Theban invaders. Towards the close of the night, when the darkness is generally deepest, the Plataians burst upon their enemies. The latter knew nothing of the ground, or of the twisting of the streets, with which the former were familiar. Those who managed to reach the gate by which they had entered found it effectually barred by a javelin pin. Some in their terror rushed to the walls and threw themselves over, almost to certain death. A few escaped through a gate, the bar of which they had hewn off with an axe given to them by a woman. The rest (and these were the large majority) rushed through the open door of a building which formed part of the city wall, but did so only to find that there was no egress and that they must surrender unconditionally. The Theban reinforcement, which had been detained partly by wind and

wet and partly by the consequent swelling of the stream of the Asopos, came up too late to help their friends, and were warned by the Plataians that if they did any harm to citizens who might be found outside the town, or to their property, the prisoners in their hands should be immediately put to death, but that they should be set free if the reinforcement would forthwith evacuate the Plataian territory.

According to the Theban story, the invading force withdrew in reliance on this covenant, ratified by a solemn oath. The Plataians on their side insisted that they had made no positive agreement, but had merely said that the prisoners should not be killed unless the negotiations for a fitting settlement should fail. No attempt was made to bring about any negotiations, and the men were slain. The Plataians thus stood convicted out of their own mouth; and the bad faith so shown seemed a fitting prelude to long years of war exasperated by fraud and treachery of the worst sort.

Theban version of the story

Two messengers had in the course of the night brought to Athens the tidings of the surprise and of its issue. Perikles lost not a moment in sending to Plataia a most earnest and peremptory message to do nothing with these prisoners until they had well considered the matter with their old allies. With an instinctive sense which acted as rapidly as that of Themistokles, he perceived that the possession of these prisoners would furnish a hold on Thebes, and through Thebes on Sparta, which was worth far more than their weight in gold. But the Athenian messenger reached Plataia only to find that the stupid rage of the Plataians had thrown away a splendid opportunity. The men were dead, and their captors were guilty of an act which was as absurdly impolitic as it was grossly immoral.

Urgent advice of Perikles to the Plataians

Such is the story of Thucydides. Diodoros tells quite another tale, to the effect that the Theban reinforcement had booty, that the Plataians had prisoners, and that they made an interchange, the disappointment of the Athenians on

reaching Plataia lying not in the discovery that they found the men killed, but in the fact that they were safe at home. How Diodoros got this version of the affair we cannot say; but we might content ourselves with the assurance that it was sufficiently refuted by its mere disagreement with the narrative of Thucydides, were it not for a most remarkable characteristic manifest in all that the latter tells us of the events which ended in the destruction of the old town of Plataia. It is impossible to read the narrative without being struck by its singularly vivid colouring. The personal details are given with all the force of dramatic representation, and not a few of these details imply the closest acquaintance with even the most insignificant actors in the business. The javelin which spikes the bolt of one gate, the axe which hews off that of another, the woman who gives the axe, the open door which attracts the Thebans like sheep to the slaughter-house, are singular features in this strangely circumstantial tale.

Narratives of Thucydides and Diodoros

But the strangeness of the narrative is greatly increased when we find that all the occurrences relating to Plataia form an episode which has not the most remote bearing on the issue of the war, or indeed on its origin. The little city becomes the scene or the object of military operations on the most gigantic scale, every turn in the course of the events being marked by incidents which could be known only to eye-witnesses, and, as it would seem, to eye-witnesses whose impressibility was vastly greater than their power of judgement and comparison. The most striking of these incidents is the escape of a certain number of the Plataians from their blockaded city to Athens; but a minute and careful examination of the narrative of Thucydides leaves no room for doubt that the story from beginning to end is an impossibility, or rather a string of impossibilities, which are however put together by a genius which in the regions of plausible fiction was equal to that of Defoe himself. The palisading of the town, the investing walls with their double trenches or moats, their vast extent,

Character of the narrative of Thucydides

their elaborate completeness, all taken together with the smallness of the besieging force and the mere handful of the besieged, for whose capture this amazing Herculean labour was undergone, strain the reader's powers of belief almost to bewilderment.

Materials of the story

When, lastly, we take the story to pieces, and examine each incident severally; when we find that they can all be taken separately like bricks without the mortar which binds them together; when we see further that these incidents are all of a most wonderful and astonishing kind, and that almost every one of them may be found in the pages of Herodotos, described in language always strangely like the expressions of Thucydides and often identical with them,—it is impossible to resist the conclusion that, whatever we may be reading, we are not reading history.

Special nature of the narrative

That this discovery, with regard to the tale with which Thucydides begins his formal narrative of the Peloponnesian war, must at first leave a painful impression on minds for whom Thucydides is the embodiment of the highest historical honesty and accuracy, we may readily admit. But it is also true that we cannot judge even the veracity of a historian until we have surveyed the conditions under which he lived and the influences under which he wrote. That with Thucydides the historical sense had made a great stride is certain; and when we have finished our scrutiny of the Plataian episode we shall remain assured that the honesty of Thucydides has not been called into question, and that the features which mark this episode may be recognised in other portions of his narrative. They are seen most clearly in the report of the so-called conference which preceded the massacre of Melos some fifteen or sixteen years later, and in the pictures drawn of the horrors preceding and accompanying the destruction of the Athenian armaments at Syracuse. It is not altogether easy to determine what was the exact view taken by Thucydides of the duties of a historian; but he tells us that his book is written especially for the instruction of future ages, which,

under like circumstances, if they should recur, might receive either warning or encouragement from the record. That he did his best to make this record a truthful one he has assured us, and we have no need to question his word. But it would be wonderful indeed if Thucydides had altogether freed himself from the old modes of thought which made the histories of Herodotos an elaborate epic poem. Like Herodotos, he could not shake off the temptation of treating epically incidents of a more or less striking character, and the temptation became doubly powerful when the incidents were of little or no value as affecting the issue of the war of which he was professing to give the history.

It is, perhaps, unfortunate that we should have to banish to the regions of myth the accessories, at least, of an event of which Perikles would have made great use for the benefit of Athens, if the infatuation of the Plataians had not stood in his way. But wherever his name appears we have fresh evidence of the consistency and the energy of his policy. While he was holding the Athenians back from all formal violation of the truce, Sparta, in accordance with her old method, was making overtures to the Persian king. Had Athens chosen to take this course she might long ago have reduced or enslaved the whole Hellenic world. The fact speaks volumes for the real character of the two cities.

Spartan overtures to the Persian king

After the attack on Plataia the Spartans felt that the time was come for throwing off the mask. A large Peloponnesian force under Archidamos crossed the Attic border. Had Perikles possessed the power, he would have acted again on the policy of Themistokles, by resisting the enemy at sea and leaving him to work his will on land. To this policy he went as near as he could; but there was the fear that the Spartan king Archidamos, his personal friend, might from feelings of kindness spare his lands, or that the Spartans might order them to be spared for the special purpose of rousing against him the suspicions of his countrymen. He therefore made over these

Spartan invasion of Attica

lands to the state, and so placed himself on the same level with all other owners, whom he strove to reconcile to the sight of ravaged farms and demolished homesteads.

The task strained his powers to the uttermost. Half a century had passed away since Xerxes first, and after him Mardonios, stood as conquerors on the Athenian Acropolis. The comparatively few who were more than sixty years of age might have some faint recollection of the horrors caused by the Persian hordes. The younger citizens, though they may have known something of the horrors of war as inflicted by themselves on the people of Samos or Euboia, had never been touched by its calamities at home. There was this further difference between the past and the present, that during the fifty years which had elapsed since the victories of Salamis and Plataia the soil of Attica had received all the benefit which an unstinted expenditure of labour and capital could secure for it. The comparatively light and thin earth which, in the opinion of Thucydides, preserved Attica from the political commotions and changes common to other portions of the Hellenic world, had been tended with a care which converted it into a garden such as could be seen perhaps nowhere else.

Irritation of the Athenians

They had now to abandon these lands to an enemy whose ravages would be far more systematic than those of the Persians, and to receive tidings of these ravages while they themselves were shut up in the vacant spaces between the Long Walls which joined Athens with Peiraieus and Phalêron, amidst disorderly masses of movable goods and the wooden frameworks of their farmhouses, which had been brought thither for security. Some among them (but these would be probably a small minority) might find shelter in the houses of friends within the city. The rest would have to lodge themselves as best they could, either in the open spaces within the walls, or in those temples and shrines of the heroes which were not, like the Acropolis and the Eleusinion, carefully guarded from profanation.

Discomfort of the Athenians within the Long Walls

The resolution not only of Perikles, but of the Athenians, was crucially tested when the Spartan herald Melesippos reached Athens with the final message of the king Archidamos. The Peloponnesian army had already set out on its march, and the Athenians had, by the advice of Perikles, determined to receive no overtures after their enemies had thus formally broken the truce. The herald, led back to the Athenian border by an escort charged to see that he spoke to no one by the way, parted from his guides with the warning that that day would be the beginning of great evils to the Hellenes. His words were justified in the sequel of events; but although they might concern the wrongdoers—that is, his own countrymen—they could not be expected to carry weight with men who, whatever may have been their faults, were, in reference to all that had happened in Korkyra and at Potidaia, perfectly in the right.

Final message of Archidamos

Convinced that further attempts at negotiation would be fruitless, Archidamos entered on the serious tasks of war and devastation. He relied on the sturdy character ascribed to the inhabitants of Acharnai, whose lands he now proceeded to ravage. It was scarcely to be supposed that this demos, which furnished three thousand heavy-armed soldiers for the Athenian army, all men made of 'ilex and maple,' tough as oak, would remain passive while their beautiful homes were laid desolate. Assuredly they would not have remained passive, had it not been for Perikles.

Archidamos at Acharnai

Athens was in a state of deep excitement. The Acharnians were not the only Athenian citizens who were experiencing the hardships involved in the policy of Perikles without having any personal consciousness of its benefits; and to all such he now seemed to be the cause of all the evils which were befalling them. Still Perikles was unshaken. His office as Strategos gave him, it seems, in time of war the power of prohibiting the ordinary assemblies of the people convened by the Prytaneis of the

Steady resolution of Perikles

Probouleutic Council (i. 65); and he availed himself of this power without hesitation. For a time he was content to send out one company only of Athenian horsemen with their Thessalian allies, and these did some mischief to the enemy; but, as the summer wore on, he felt justified in providing an opening elsewhere for the pent-up energies of the people. Orders were given that a fleet of one hundred Athenian ships should, after effecting a junction with fifty Korkyraian triremes, ravage the coasts of Peloponnesos.

The ships were ready to leave the harbour, and Perikles had already entered his own trireme, when an eclipse of the sun, we are told, filled all the spectators with terror. He had not, indeed, the modern knowledge which calculates such incidents with precision to the moment; but the teaching of Anaxagoras had shown him sufficiently the nature of the phenomenon. Holding up his cloak close to the face of the sailing-master of his ship, he asked him if he regarded the darkness caused by it as the sign of impending calamity, and on receiving a negative answer, replied that the hiding of the sun was nothing but the same thing on a larger scale. Such is the story told by Plutarch of the eclipse, which Thucydides mentions separately as an incident belonging to this year (B.C. 431). Plutarch seems to have referred it to the following year; but the mistake is a matter of little consequence. The expedition was marked by no brilliant success and no great disaster; and the only noteworthy event belonging to it is a dashing exploit performed at Methônê by a young Spartan officer named Brasidas.

Eclipse of the sun

But before the year ended the Athenians had sterner work to do nearer home. Their first task was the expulsion of the unfortunate Eginetans from their island, which, so long as they remained there, was regarded by the Athenians as the eyesore of the Peiraieus. These wretched people were cast out upon the Peloponnesian coast, and to some of them, in gratitude for the help which they had received from them in the Helot war (p. 17), the Spartans gave a home in Thyrea. The

Expulsion of the Eginetans

Athenians had thus a population bitterly hostile to them planted on the march or border-lands between Lakonia and Argolis, answering to the Helots who, equally hostile to Sparta, had found a home at Naupaktos (p. 20). For the moment, the banishment of the Eginetans was a gain to the Athenians, who placed a number of their own citizens as settlers on the island.

Punishment of the Megarians

Their next task was to make the Megarians smart for their defection. They did so without mercy, and the descriptions of the comic poets may, with all allowance for exaggeration, be taken as evidence of an appalling amount of misery inflicted upon them. Ancient warfare was almost invariably merciless; and the Megarians, who were reduced to offer their children for sale as Megarian pigs, had placed themselves beyond the pale of Athenian forbearance. This work of terrible retaliation was still going on, when the fleet, which had been ravaging the Peloponnesian coasts under the command of Perikles, effected a junction with the land army, and thus exhibited the largest Athenian force brought together before the strength of Athens was impaired by the terrible plague of the following year.

Reserve fund of Perikles in the Acropolis

Aware that a struggle had begun which might strain the resources of Athens to the uttermost, Perikles effected the carrying of some measures of precaution, of which the Athenians felt the benefit later on in a great crisis of their history. Perikles, it must be repeated, anticipated no such crisis except as a result of the abandonment of that policy which he felt sure must end in the complete triumph of Athens. But there was the possibility that this policy might be discarded in favour of more attractive schemes for distant conquests; and wishing still to save his countrymen from the difficulties in which these schemes might involve them, he set apart in the Acropolis a fund of a thousand talents, under the solemn sentence that any citizen proposing to spend this money for any other purpose than that of repelling a maritime attack of the

Peiraieus by an enemy, should be instantly put to death. The anathema is terrible in sound, but it was a mere form, and it was known to be nothing more. Anyone wishing to divert the money to other uses had nothing more to do than to propose the repeal of the Psephisma, or decree, which laid the anathema. But although the penalty might be easily avoided, as Perikles well knew, it served to mark with the strongest condemnation of the state anyone who might even dream of encroaching on the fund except as a last resource in the presence of overwhelming dangers.

The year closed with an impressive ceremony. It was the Athenian custom to bring home the ashes or bones of those who fell in war, and to honour them with a public funeral. Ten chests represented those who had fallen in each of the ten tribes (i. 63), one empty bier being carried with them, to denote the slain whose bodies could not be found. All these were borne in procession to the Kerameikos, the most beautiful suburb of the city, and there, almost under the shadow of the precipitous rock from which the virgin goddess extended her protecting spear over the land, the citizen chosen for the purpose addressed to the mourners, and to the Athenians generally, such words of encouragement and comfort as the circumstances of the time seemed to call for.

Public funeral of the slain at Athens

In this case the number of the slain was not great. They had not been placed in conditions of special difficulty or danger; they had undergone no extraordinary sufferings; they had performed no unusual exploits or done to the state any pre-eminently brilliant services. It was, in short, a comparatively commonplace occasion, which called for no elaborate display of oratorical power. So at least it seemed in the eyes of the Halikarnassian Dionysios; and yet Perikles, who was appointed to pronounce their funeral oration, availed himself of the commission to deliver a speech calculated to stir most profoundly the deepest feelings of the Athenian people.

Circumstances of the case

He resolved, if we may believe Thucydides, to speak to

them as he would have spoken to them if they had been fresh from such battles as those of Salamis, Plataia, or Mykalê. Doubts may, indeed, be raised as to the trustworthiness of Thucydides, but they can scarcely be considered as fair or reasonable. We have seen (p. 85) that there are portions of his history in which the epical feeling, manifest everywhere in the pages of Herodotos, puts for the time into the background the duty of the historian as the sober narrator of facts for which he has strictly contemporary testimony; but these epical pictures may be most easily separated from the general thread of his history, and fail after all to touch his credibility as a narrator of facts, where these facts are of importance in the general current of events. That Perikles spoke precisely as Thucydides represents him to have spoken is by no means likely. The historian, in fact, tells us that he did not, but he insists that he spoke according to the general tenor of the words which he puts into his mouth; and this statement we may very fairly accept without misgiving.

Funeral oration of Perikles as reported by Thucydides

The fact is, that to a statesman like Perikles the present occasion, commonplace as it might seem to be, was one the importance of which could not be exaggerated. It brought before him the principles on which he had acted through the whole course of a long career. It seemed also to put them to an effectual test; and in any case it furnished an opportunity of explaining to his countrymen what the objects were for which they and their enemies were severally fighting, what the work of Athens ought to be, and what should be their own motives for putting out all their strength to secure her ascendency.

Motives influencing Perikles in his address

This, however, was not all. During the year which was now coming to an end there may have been scant opportunity or none for brilliant achievements; but in point of fact the efforts made by the Athenians called for more sustained energy and a more patient and persistent resolution than those which had marked the struggle with Persia. In both cases the Athenians living in

Sacrifices incurred by the Athenians

the country had had to abandon their homes; and the growth both of population and of wealth had vastly added to the difficulties and the repulsiveness of the task. There was more to remove and more to be lost, and much of what could not be removed would form the most precious parts of their possessions, and be especially the objects which the enemy would feel a malignant satisfaction in destroying.

Review of Athenian history by Perikles

The criticism of Dionysios may therefore be dismissed as having no foundation in fact. It is absurd to suppose that Perikles was ignorant of the wants of his countrymen, or of the way in which it would be most wise to deal with them for the success of Athens in this struggle with enemies who hated all the distinguishing features of her polity. At no other time could they so need to be reminded of the efforts and achievements of their forefathers in order to spur them on to fresh efforts for themselves; and Perikles was unquestionably justified in passing rapidly in review the course in which the Athenian empire had taken shape and gained its strength. The picture drawn by him almost astonishes us with its splendour, and its glory becomes even more striking because his eloquence has little or no rhetorical ornament. A certain pathos attaches itself to his language, as it is impossible to doubt that for Perikles the description of Athens in his own day was a description which would apply to the Athens of his children's children. He felt assured that an adherence to the line of policy which he had marked out would insure her triumph; and the only difference which he anticipated was that later generations of Athenian citizens would be enabled to look back upon a history still more brilliant. He could not know that Athens had in so short a time reached her highest point. Yet so it was; and his description, as it would not have been true of Athens in the days of Themistocles, can be applied with no greater truth to the Athens of Demosthenes.

The picture drawn by Perikles may or may not be true; but we cannot well doubt that it is his work and not that of another. Thucydides probably heard the speech himself.

His word at the least is pledged to us for the substantial, though not for the verbal, accuracy of his reports of speeches given in his history; and of this oration of Perikles we may safely say that he would have no temptation to misrepresent the general bearing. But if the picture be true at all, it holds up to our view much that Englishmen have attained through the efforts of centuries, and much at which we are still only aiming. Yet at Athens the main part of the work had been done in little more than fifty years. Barely eighty years had passed since the expulsion of the tyrant Hippias (i. 50); and the reforms of Kleisthenes, although they opened the way for later democratic changes, affected in no great degree the ascendency of the old oligarchical houses. Within half a century Athens had pushed back the Persian power beyond the limits of Asiatic Hellas, had raised up against it the mighty barrier of her maritime empire, and had developed at home a genius in art, science, and government such as the world had never yet beheld.

Rapid growth of Athenian power

Fifty years before, all this growth was a thing of the future; but the energy of the Athenian people gave promise of its realisation. Fifty years later, the fruits of this development were in some aspects of the Athenian civilisation as splendid as ever; but the old spirit of unwearied and indomitable perseverance was gone. The union of the two could be found only in the days of Perikles, and it is this circumstance which gives to his funeral speech its peculiar value. The pictures now commonly drawn of an ideal perfection of human life represent a state in which law is strictly inforced, but in which the law interferes neither with the tastes, the fancies, nor with the work of individual citizens; and if this be the goal aimed at, we may be constrained to admit that in some respects the Athens of the days of Perikles had attained to it more nearly than we have now. We can therefore well understand the high-strung enthusiasm which the speaker felt and which his hearers shared with him, as he dwelt on the privileges and

Enthusiasm of Perikles in speaking of Athens

freedom of Athenian citizens. He described to them a polity for which they were in no way indebted to the wisdom or the experience of other lands. It had grown up on Athenian soil, and each step which removed it further from the old religious exclusiveness of the Eupatrids (i. 19) brought it nearer to the great consummation in which all her citizens could take part in the work of governing themselves.

From this point of view the government of Athens was a strict democracy; but the spirit of Athenian democracy had nothing in common with those modern notions which look on the process of reducing things to a dead level as progress, and regard a common slavery as the guarantee of that progress. At Athens the rule of the people was maintained by a spirit of voluntary obedience to law, while the life of all the citizens was embellished with the highest resources of a refined civilisation. This is a circumstance of which we are apt to lose sight, but on which it is most necessary to lay special stress. The richest Athenian had no better title than the poorest to the highest enjoyment and culture which Athenian art could afford. The temples of the city and of the Acropolis were their common property, and all alike might gaze on the pictures of Polygnotos, the statues of Pheidias. All could take part in the splendid festivals which were associated with the highest triumphs of dramatic genius. None could complain of being debarred by poverty from the highest gratification which Athens could afford to her children. The state was, as we have seen, ready to pay the charge of entrance for all who could not pay it for themselves. In short, it was in the power of the Athenian citizen to cultivate to the utmost his sense of beauty and grandeur without incurring any cost; and all this freedom and refinement was obtained without any attempts to fashion after one mould the lives and habits of the people generally.

Athenian democracy

In all his remarks which have reference to this subject, it is clear that Perikles is anxious to exhibit a contrast as striking and as sharp as possible to all those states of society

the principles of which were antagonistic to those of the Athenian polity; and of these antagonistic states Sparta was in his judgement manifestly the type. At Sparta everything was compelled to move in a definite groove; the business of life, such as it was, was subjected to a network of rules, and a rigid inquisitorial system tormented the Spartan citizen from the cradle to the grave. The very thought of such terrible bondage was hateful to the mind of Perikles; and we have already seen in the case of Pausanias that it excited even in Spartan citizens a feeling of disgust which would easily run on into treason and rebellion.

Contrast drawn by Perikles between Athens and Sparta

Athens had no reason to fear such dangers. The feature which most of all distinguished her from other Greek cities was the large freedom which she granted to the tastes and even to the whims and fancies of her children. Amongst these there would be some who must be termed at least eccentric; but even these were not met with frowning looks or subjected to any social persecution for their peculiarities. This picture differs widely from the ideal descriptions of a Polis, or city, as given by Aristotle and by Plato. The former of these two philosophers was far from insisting on that thorough-going despotism of the Platonic Outopia (Utopia), where poetry was shut out from the domain in which geometry ruled supreme; but in Plato's polis the state nevertheless exercises a minute supervision over the daily life of the citizen, prescribing the books which he is to read or not to read, the sciences which he is to learn, and the age at which he is to marry. Of all these restrictions the Athens of Perikles knows nothing.

Athenian freedom as described by Perikles

But although in the main Perikles was amply justified in drawing this contrast to the credit of Athens, he was in one point mistaken. He dwells earnestly on the spirit and patriotism of her citizens as a surer ground of confidence than any which could be furnished by the unbending discipline of Sparta. In times of peace the life of the Athenian might be spent seemingly

His idea of Athenian military efficiency

in the highest intellectual refinement, and amongst pleasures which culture alone could enable him fully to appreciate; but when there was need of effort and sacrifice, the Athenian would show himself as capable of sustained exertion as any who were brought up in Spartan schools or barracks. It was vitally important that the soldiers of Athens should be able to cope with those of Sparta; and Perikles was honestly convinced that their efficiency in the battle-field was fully equal to that of any troops who might be opposed to them, and that they were therefore gainers by the lack of the incessant drill in which their enemies passed their lives.

Spartan and Athenian military systems

Unfortunately, this inference was fallacious. In respect of personal bravery, no distinction could be drawn between the western Ionian and the western Dorian to the discredit of the former; but the Athenian military system, beyond doubt, did not make each individual man as much at home in his work as the Spartan Hoplite, or heavy-armed soldier, was made by the mathematical precision of his training. Both the one and the other aimed at the perfection of obedience; but the Spartan system so exercised the sagacity of the individual soldier, and so called into action his power of judgement, that no disaster in the field could prevent their companies from returning at once, if broken, to their proper order. The Athenian fought among the men of his tribe, an unwieldy mass imperfectly under the control of the Taxiarchos; the Spartan system, caring nothing for social or political distinctions, distributed the citizens into small companies in which every man knew his place and duty. Thus, even if their ranks were broken by overwhelming numbers, there could be no confusion, and therefore also no panic, and thus the steadiness of the Spartan armies and their pertinacity of resistance left no room for rivalry.

But that which the Spartan was by land, the Athenian assuredly was by sea. In the maritime empire of Athens, discipline and technical education had brought about results which filled the whole Hellenic world with mingled

admiration and fear. Since the days of the great Persian invasion the Athenians had entirely reversed their system of naval tactics, and this change had been rendered necessary by alterations in the construction of their ships. We have seen the Eginetans (p. 38) and Corinthians (p. 63) baffled and beaten by the effect of these reforms; and Perikles could thus say with truth that with the Athenians the highest culture involved no neglect of duty and no shrinking either from danger or from the most costly sacrifices.

Athenian naval tactics

The contingent necessity for such sacrifices must, indeed, have faced them at every turn. If he fell on the field of battle, and still more if he became a captive, the Athenian lost immeasurably more than the Spartan. The former was not only able to take part in the great councils of the people, in the carrying or the rejection of laws, and in the administration of justice, but was held to have disgraced himself if he made any attempt to shirk these duties. The result of this high political and judicial education was a happy versatility which enabled him to concentrate his powers at will on any given task. For such a state Perikles insisted that it was worth while to die; but the sacrifice of those who so died was altogether greater than that of the Spartan who gave up nothing more than the dull, if not hateful, monotony of the barrack, and who knew absolutely nothing of the higher aims and larger sympathies of Athenian society. We can be at no loss, therefore, to understand the enthusiasm with which Perikles, after his sketch of their political and social life, addresses himself to those who were mourning the loss of kinsmen or friends fallen in battle. These had shown themselves worthy of the men by whose efforts the great fabric of Athenian empire had been raised, and it was impossible to bestow upon them any higher praise.

Value of Athens to the Athenian

When there is so much to enlist our admiration or to call forth our sympathy, it seems invidious to point to defects which mar a beautiful picture. We are bound to do so, only

because without it we cannot understand the real character of the old Greek civilisation taken, as it was at Athens, at its best. To the widows of the slain Perikles speaks a few words only; and the curt remark that the glory of women is to be utterly unknown to any men except such as might be members of their own families jars terribly upon all our convictions. We have had to notice already the wretched results produced by this theory in Athenian life (i. 47); but Perikles had himself experienced from this very cause such exquisite misery that we are tempted to doubt whether he gave utterance to any such words. We would willingly believe that these few sentences belong to the number of touches supplied by the historian, whose feelings on the subject of the seclusion of women may have been more blunt.

Remarks of Perikles on the position and duties of free Athenian women

Lastly, it may be well to repeat that the picture drawn by Perikles is, after all, only relative. We hear much of democratical government and of the equal rights and privileges of all citizens; but we have to remember that the Athenian democracy itself was strictly an aristocratical oligarchy, and maintained itself only by being such. The majority of the dwellers in Athens were slaves. The object of Athenian polity was to work out the highest attainable good for the general body of the citizens on the foundation of slavery. We wait still for the developement of a polity which shall work the same good for nations after the last vestiges of slavery have been destroyed.

Athenian democracy really an oligarchy

Thus far the career of Perikles had been crowned with a large, if not the largest, measure of success. He had grown old in the exercise of an ascendency which, while it rested on sound reason, and was ready to abide any scrutiny, had also been favoured by the general prosperity of the city. The second year of the war brought with it events utterly unlooked for, and all but overwhelming. It was a year of misery, after which Athens was never again quite what she had been before. She had now to struggle not with dangers of which

Spartan invasion of Attica in the second year of the war, B.C. 430

she could take full account, or with enemies of whose resources she could form an estimate more or less correct, but with a foe against which scientific skill and generous self-devotion seemed to go for nothing. Immediately after the spring equinox the Spartans again invaded Attica, and, after ravaging the Eleusinian plain, passed on through the south-eastern portion of the country, to the district of the silver mines of Laureion.

Outbreak of the plague in Athens

While they were carrying out their work of devastation, they learnt that their enemies were being smitten down by a calamity far more terrible than any which their own troops could inflict upon them. A strange disease had for some time been stalking westwards from its birthplace in Nubia or Ethiopia. It had worked its way through Egypt, Libya, and parts of the Persian empire, and just as the summer heats were beginning it broke out furiously in Peiraieus. Both here and everywhere else within the whole circuit of the walls of Athens all the conditions were present which would be likely to impart frightful virulence to any epidemic. Not only were the houses in Athens itself filled with country folk, to whom their town friends had offered hospitality, but in all empty spaces within the walls vast multitudes were crowded together in small tents or stifling huts, in which all conditions needed for the avoidance of disease, partly perhaps from carelessness and ignorance, but much more from sheer necessity, were absolutely neglected. The final catastrophe must have come at once, if the horses and cattle, which had happily been sent to Euboia, had also been introduced within the walls.

Virulence of the epidemic

As it was, the Athenians had to contend with evils of gigantic proportions. The physicians, who hastened to the aid of the sufferers, were among the first, as we are told, to fall victims of the disease. The number of deaths, as compared with the attacks, was appallingly large, and the patients soon began to see their death-warrant in the first signs or sensations of sickness. The scenes which followed were such as no Hellenic city had ever yet seen; but even

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during this terrible summer at Athens we hear nothing of the worst horrors which have marked many, or most, of the plagues of modern times. When the sickness began, some expressed a suspicion that the Spartans had poisoned the tanks; but we are not told that anyone within the walls was charged with the crime, and there is no sign that men were hunted to death, as they were in London, or in Milan, on the absurd ground that they smeared doors and walls with deadly ointment to keep alive and spread the pestilence.

Popular predictions and superstitions

But it would have been strange indeed if some had not traced this calamity to the intervention of offended and angry gods. There was no difference in sound between the Greek words which denoted famine and pestilence, and many quoted a verse, said to be old, which spoke of a Dorian war and of a plague which was to come with it. Thucydides remarks that the expression would apply just as well, if in later days another Dorian war should come, with famine in place of pestilence. Others spoke of a promise said to have been given not long ago to the Spartans by the Delphian god, who pledged himself to fight on their behalf with all his might. The natural inference was that he was now redeeming his plighted word.

General irritation against Perikles

But, in spite of all this overwhelming distress and misery, Perikles was still unconquered. It was supposed that the outburst of plague induced the Spartans to cut short their sojourn in Attica; but even thus they remained longer in the country than they did in any subsequent invasion. They were still in the Paralian district when Perikles left Peiraieus on his last naval campaign. With a hundred triremes he ravaged the Peloponnesian coasts, and by seizing the Lakonian fortress of Prasiai taught the Spartans that the power of Athens could touch them near their own home. But the plague followed the Athenians wherever they went; and the men who had thus far served under Perikles carried the epidemic to the camp of the besieging force at Potidaia. In less than six weeks Hagnon, the general who had led them thither, returned to

Athens with two thousand five hundred hoplites in place of the four thousand with which he had started. He found the city fairly conquered. The old energy was gone. Envoys had been sent to Sparta, on the vain errand of suing for peace; and popular outcries denounced Perikles as the author of all the misery. Probably even now the majority were not really convinced that this charge was true; but it was not wonderful if, in their terrible physical depression, they were carried away by the wild language of his political opponents.

Speech of Perikles before the assembled people

The crisis was one with which Perikles found himself compelled to deal promptly. Convening the assembly by his authority as general, he met the people with a more direct rebuke of their faintheartedness, and a more distinct assertion of his own claims on their confidence, than any to which he had ever resorted in more prosperous times. In plain words, he put before them the exact state of the case. The war they had found it impossible to avert; and, as soon as they saw it to be inevitable, all other considerations gave way at once to the paramount work of providing for the safety of the state, no matter what might be the sufferings entailed on individual men. To a certain extent he had looked for this outburst of anger. He had never supposed that the dwellers in the country would be otherwise than irritated at the change which transferred them from their pleasant farmsteads to cramped and unwholesome huts within the city walls. He was quite prepared to find that the devastation of their cornfields and the destruction of their fruit-trees would furnish welcome arguments to his opponents. But he had not foreseen, and he could not foresee, the awful visitation under which they were now labouring; nor was it fair to lay blame on him for this disaster unless they were prepared to give him credit for every piece of good luck which might befall them during the war. Sudden calamities might be expected to shake the strongest judgement; but even if a painful effort should be needed to restore the balance, Athenians surely

ought to be able to make this effort, in sure confidence that their energy would bring with it its own reward. So long as Athens remained mistress of the sea they could afford to surrender all other possessions without more than a passing feeling of irritation or regret. The loss of their farms, their crops, their trees, might involve a severe strain on their patience; but, whatever their loss might be, it would be made up to them in the end, and in the meantime the products of distant lands were virtually their own, while their fleets could inflict on their enemies' coasts a stern punishment for all wrongs received at their hands. In short, they might face their foes not merely with cheerfulnesr, but with a lofty sense of superiority. One thing only they had to fear, and this was the abandonment or the forfeiture of their imperial power over their allies.

Effects of this speech on the people

It is possible, and even likely, that the Athenians may have listened to many hard speeches against Perikles before they heard his defence; but when they heard it, it seems to have carried conviction to their minds. All thoughts of concluding peace were at once cast aside, and they resolved to carry on the war with vigour.

Alleged fining of Perikles

In other respects the narrative of these events is not altogether consistent. Thucydides tells us that the opponents of Perikles were still powerful enough to induce the people to fine him; but he is silent as to the grounds on which the fine was inflicted. Some versions of the story give the fine as one of fifteen talents. In the account of Diodoros it rises to the enormous sum of eighty talents. By Plato we are informed that the offence thus punished was theft, and this can only mean malversation of public moneys. But it is impossible to reconcile this charge with the strong and unqualified language in which Thucydides always speaks of the personal integrity of Perikles, and which he invariably represents Perikles as using about himself. Nor can we forget that Thucydides had no motive for exaggerating his probity, or indeed of ascribing to him any probity at all. The leanings of the historian were decidedly

in favour of the party opposed to Perikles through the whole of his career. It is certain, however, that the strategoi, or generals, passed out of office about midsummer; and the story of the fine may have grown out of the real or supposed fact that his enemies succeeded in preventing his re-election for the time. In any case, the prevention of his re-election may easily have been represented afterwards as his removal from an office which he had held for many successive years.

Death of his sons Xanthippos and Paralos

But that even the people were in greater or less degree irritated against him seems to be as manifest as that his enemies were in a state of fierce exasperation at the results which they traced to his policy. The storm, however, soon passed away. The feeling of resentment which may have been roused by his seeming immunity from the miseries affecting the people at large was changed to one of sympathy when they saw the plague fall as heavily on his house as it had fallen on any other. The death of his sister and of his son Xanthippos was followed by that of his younger son Paralos; and the outburst of his grief when he placed the funeral wreath on the head of the latter showed that the iron had indeed entered into his soul. There remained still the son of Aspasia, who bore his own name; and the people we are told allowed this child to be enrolled amongst the number of Athenian citizens, in contravention of a law said to have been proposed by Perikles himself, which restricted citizenship to such as had both an Athenian father and an Athenian mother.

Re-election of Perikles as general

Nor was this the only evidence that their old feelings towards him were regaining strength. If we doubt the infliction of the fine, we must still more reject the story of its remission. The offence of aggravated embezzlement was not likely to receive such indulgent treatment. But there is no doubt that he was re-elected strategos; and this is the last incident recorded in the narrative of his career by Thucydides, who tells us that he lived for two years and a half after the night attack of

the Thebans on Plataia. He therefore lived long enough to hear of the first and perhaps of the second of the two great victories won by Phormion in the third year of the war. But if he heard of the latter he must have heard of an incident which could not fail to awaken in his mind a sense of coming disaster. The diversion of the ships sent to reinforce Phormion to the attack of an insignificant Cretan town must have filled him with painful misgivings. He had declared his strong conviction that the ultimate victory of Athens depended on her withstanding the temptation to undertake distant expeditions and useless conquests; and here already was proof that among his countrymen were some on whom his teaching had made no impression.

Illness and death of Perikles

If we may believe the stories told by Plutarch, the death of Perikles was preceded by long-continued prostration both of body and mind. It is absurd indeed to suppose that in his case the plague took a course different from that which it took in others; and it seems clear, if the report can be trusted at all, that the disease of which he died was not the plague. Of the two anecdotes which Plutarch gives of his last days one is worth nothing. It tells us that to a friend, who looked at an amulet placed round his neck by the women of his household, he confessed that he must be in a bad way indeed when he could patiently put up with such nonsense. The other leaves no room for the charges brought against him by comic poets or by those who agreed with them. A group of friends, conversing round his death-bed, on which he lay, as they thought, unconscious, spoke of his exploits and his distinction as a general. Hearing all that they said, Perikles told them that his achievements in the field were no more than those of other leaders. 'You have forgotten to mention what really is to my credit, that no Athenian has through me had to put on mourning dress.' It is obvious that this story could not have been put together by those who, as Plutarch says, believed that the devastations of the plague were caused by the multitudes crowded within the city walls, and that he, and he alone, to cover the iniquity

of his own dealings and those of Aspasia, had blown up the Peloponnesian war. The anecdote, whether true or not, is a formal declaration that neither for the war nor for the miseries rising from the pestilence could any blame be laid at his door. The story, in short, agrees closely with the judgement which Thucydides expresses of his incorruptible integrity.

Still, as we have seen, charges of corruption were brought against him, not so much in the sense of receiving bribes as in that of obtaining power through the bribing of others. The assignment of pay to the Dikastai, or jurymen; the bestowal of state money for the free admission of all citizens to the theatre; the embellishment of the city with the splendid works of the greatest of sculptors and painters, were all treated as bribes on the largest scale tendered to the whole people. Regarded from the point of view of that or of almost any other age, the charge is of the flimsiest possible kind. The jurors, at the worst, received but scant pay for their time and their thought; and if the state was interested in the mental education of the citizens by means of the highest art (and the theory both of Themistokles and of Perikles held it to be directly interested in it), then the granting of public money for the attainment of this end was amply justified. As to the third charge, it would, we need scarcely say, be monstrous to affirm that the state may not spend money on public works so long as it retains a reserve fund adequate to meet extraordinary and unforeseen contingencies. Such a fund Athens, and probably Athens alone of all Greek cities, possessed at the beginning of this fatal struggle; and its amount was probably that of three years of her revenue. In this respect the contrast, as Perikles insisted, was striking between Athens and the Peloponnesian states which could barely pay their way.

Charges brought against Perikles of corrupting the people

We thus reach the conclusion that the career of Perikles was from first to last consistent. It nowhere shows the least divergence either of principles or of policy. As he had been in

the days when he was associated with Ephialtes, so he was in the days when he alone had to bear the brunt of the irritation which sprang naturally from the consciousness of unparalleled misery after the outburst of the plague. Throughout all these years he had insisted that the maintenance of the maritime empire of Athens must be their first consideration, although he had no reluctance to extend the Athenian confederation by land, so long as this could be done without endangering her rule by sea. His proposals for a Pan-Hellenic congress (p. 36) were most of all significant of the higher aims which probably no one else shared with the statesman who thus gave expression to them.

Unvarying consistency of the career of Perikles

But even the splendid prospect which the acceptance of these proposals would have opened before him never overcame his habitual caution. When the Persian fleets had been fairly driven from the Egean, he opposed himself generally to the party which would have committed Athens to more distant enterprises against the power of the Persian king. Nor was he influenced by the arguments which commended these enterprises to the Athenians as a means for retaliating on the eastern despot the disasters which he had brought, or striven to bring, on the Greeks. According to Plutarch, the advice of Perikles, if followed, would have prevented the defeat of Tolmides at Koroneia (p. 42), and would even have averted the struggle with Sparta and her confederation. The latter statement is in a high degree unlikely; but beyond doubt the keynote of the policy of Perikles was the need of putting aside all private interests if in this great struggle they should clash with the interests of Athens.

His habitual caution

The lessons which he wished to inforce above all other lessons were, first, that the resources of the state were not to be wasted, or risked, in enterprises which would tend only or chiefly to the benefit of individuals; and next, that enterprises to which the state had been committed must not be mismanaged or starved in order

Essential principles of his policy

to further the purposes of dishonest or factious politicians. On these two rocks Athens, in the emphatic language of Thucydides, made shipwreck. He lived himself to see his first warning disregarded, when the fleet sent out to reinforce Phormion (p. 106) was drawn aside to blockade the Cretan Kydonia. He was spared the feeling of unutterable pain which he must have felt had he beheld the departure of the doomed Athenian armament for Syracuse. He would, in this case, have seen his second warning flung to the winds, and, indeed, all his counsels disregarded together. Not only was Athens committed to a distant enterprise of great danger and difficulty, but, when undertaken, the project was not carried out with determined and hearty resolution. It was starved, or fed too late, in order to suit the interests of factions at home; and the awful catastrophe did little towards checking the new evils of which this rivalry of factions was the sign. But in spite of all the difficulties in which she was thus entangled, in spite of the rebellion of her allies, in spite of the weight of Persian money thrown into the Spartan scale, Athens held out for nine years longer against the utmost efforts of the enemies combined against her; and we have the assurance of Thucydides that even then she would not have fallen had she not been literally torn asunder by the feuds of her own children.

Subsequent history of Athens

If, then, the real greatness of Athens began with Themistokles, with Perikles, after the short space of half a century, it closed. Henceforth her course was downwards. The perfect discipline which secured to the Athenian navy such magnificent success down to the catastrophe at Syracuse was gradually weakened after that event, although it remained still so formidable that only treachery could get the better of it. The social and political conditions of Athens in the time of Perikles were such as must follow when the theory of the independent and self-sufficing city (polis) has been carried to its logical results; when a society, not too small to hold its ground against all who might be likely to assail it, and not so large as to become unwieldy by

its mere numbers, has aimed at and brought about the highest culture of which its individual citizens are capable; and when in this task it has been aided by a people wonderfully versatile and keenly sensitive to all impressions of art and science, of poetry, rhetoric, music, and painting.

But it was in the highest degree unlikely that these conditions would ever be combined again in the same intensity, and in point of fact they have at no other time been so combined. Hence the age of Perikles stands pre-eminent as the most brilliant phase in the history of mankind, and the genius of this splendid age is embodied in Perikles himself. His policy, if it had been consistently carried out, would have changed the course of the world's history. As it is, his career is full of instruction for statesmen in every land and in every age.

The Periklean age.

PHORMION

In the last gloomy months of his life Perikles was cheered by the tidings of one, if not two, of the most brilliant victories ever won by Athenian fleets. These victories were the achievements of Phormion, whose reputation as a leader in war has kept out of sight any distinction which he may have attained as a statesman. We must, however, remember that no Athenian became prominent as a general without taking some active share in the political life of the city; nor are there wanting indications that the military or naval enterprises of Phormion were directed by sound statesmanlike instincts worthy of a contemporary of Perikles.

Political and military career of Phormion

These two illustrious men died almost within the same year. But which of them may have been the elder, we cannot say with any certainty. Of the birth and the early years of Phormion nothing is known. His name is first mentioned as that of an officer sent out with reinforcements for the suppression of the Samian revolt, B.C. 440 (p. 48). Eight years later (B.C. 432) he appeared before Potidaia (p. 64) with an armament which completely invested the revolted city.

Phormion at Samos and Potidaia

His efficiency as a statesman and a general was shown more clearly in the operations which, not long after the attack of the Thebans on Plataia, strengthened the power of Athens in north-western Hellas. Some Ambrakian colonists had succeeded in expelling from the Amphilochian Argos the inhabitants by

Campaign in Ambrakia, B.C. 429

whose name it was distinguished from the more celebrated Argos of the Peloponnesos. The Amphilochians invoked the aid of the kindred tribes around them, and of the Akarnanians generally. All together besought aid from the Athenians, who took up their cause against the intruding Ambrakiots. The town was taken, the inhabitants were reduced to slavery, the Amphilochians were restored to their old abode, and the Akarnanians joined the Athenian confederacy with feelings of strong personal attachment to Phormion, which aided greatly in furthering the interests of Athens in this remote part of Hellas.

This alliance added to the value of the Helot settlement at Naupaktos (p. 20), which was to serve now as a base of operations directed especially against the naval and commercial fleets of Corinth. Here Phormion was stationed with twenty triremes, with orders to blockade the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf. The Spartans, with their allies, saw at once the dangers which thus threatened them. The Ambrakiots made first a vain attempt to seize the Amphilochian Argos, and then, aided by a Peloponnesian force, joined the Chaonians and other rude tribesmen of the neighbouring regions in a combined effort to reduce the whole of Akarnania, and to follow up this enterprise with the conquest of Zakynthos and Kephallenia. But the Spartan commander Knemos was not one of the most skilful of generals, and the scheme ended in failure. Before Knemos could reach Sparta, the Corinthian reinforcements which had been sent to support him had undergone a decisive defeat at the hands of Phormion.

Phormion at Naupaktos

The latter was singularly happy in the season of his command. The triremes, which had won for Athens the lordship of the sea, had, during the years which had passed since the battle of Mykalê, become instruments almost instinct with life. The marvellous strides made in naval science and skill had been shown in the disasters of the Eginetans (p. 38) and in the conflict between the fleets of Korkyra and Corinth. Since the time

Changes in Athenian naval tactics

of the Persian invasion the tactics of the Athenians had been practically reversed. Anxiety to keep the shelter of the shore had given place to anxiety for ample space on the open sea. The conditions of a sea fight had been for the Athenians, and were still for their enemies, pretty much those of a land battle; and if the Athenians could avoid coming to close quarters, their victory was virtually assured. No Athenian leader appreciated the changes thus brought about more thoroughly than Phormion; and never again were the results of the new tactics to be so brilliant.

Geography of the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf

In the present instance the circumstances under which he fought were all that he could well wish them to be. He had only twenty ships. The Corinthians had five-and-forty; and, having no actual experience of the discipline and efficiency of Athenian sailors, they indulged in confident expectations of success, feeling sure that they could determine the situation of the conflict. The entrance to the Krissaian or Corinthian Gulf is a narrow strait barely one mile in width, locked in by two promontories, the southern known simply as the Rhion or Ness, and the northern as the Rhion of Molykreion, a town about three miles to the west of the strait, facing Patrai, which lies about five miles to the south-west of the Achaian Rhion. At about equal distances from the northern or Molykreion Rhion lay Naupaktos on the east, within the gulf, and the little territory of Chalkis near the mouth of the river Euênos to the west, outside the gulf.

Miscalculation of the Corinthians

A leader who wished to avoid a fleet stationed at any point between the northern Rhion and Naupaktos would naturally keep his ships on the southern side of the gulf, and, having doubled the cape, would strike from Patrai for Chalkis. On doubling this southern cape the Corinthians saw that Phormion also had passed the entrance of the gulf on the northern side; but they had no idea that their way would be disputed. In the engagements off Korkyra which preceded the outbreak of the war, the Athenians had been under orders which left them

very little room for untrammelled action, and their numbers were not such as to justify them in running any serious risk. Taking their conduct then as an indication of what might be expected now, the Corinthians moved from Patrai, only to find that the Athenian triremes were bearing directly upon them from the Chalkidian shore. The evening was closing in, and the Corinthians thought that they might put Phormion off his guard by pretending to take up their station where they were, and thus steal across the passage under cover of darkness.

The hope of the Corinthians, that when he saw them come to anchor Phormion would fall back to his own ground, was doomed to be disappointed. He kept the sea all night, and at break of day his triremes confronted the Corinthian ships, which were then creeping across the gulf. He could not desire more favourable conditions for the impending conflict. The Corinthian ships were awkwardly built, poorly equipped, and manned by crews with little or no experience in rowing; and when these ships formed themselves into a circle with their prows outward, leaving just space enough for five of their best ships, reserved within the circle, to dart out upon the enemy, but not enough to give room for the terrible manœuvre known as the Diekplous, Phormion saw that the issue of the day was in his own hands. The excellence of Athenian naval tactics lay in combined rapidity and precision of movement; and the special work of the trireme was to strike the enemy's ship in some weak or dangerous part, avoiding all contact with the armed prow or beak. Hence, wherever there was room, the triremes sailed through gaps in the enemy's line, and then, turning suddenly round, struck his ship in the stern or the side, thus instantly disabling or sinking her. For this operation, free space was indispensable; and thus the revolution in Athenian naval warfare is fully explained. It was now to the interest of the Peloponnesians to keep to the closed and shallow waters, from which the Athenians also dreaded to be drawn during the Persian wars.

Arrangements of Phormion for the battle

Soon after sunrise the breeze blows strongly from the Corinthian gulf westwards, and Phormion knew well that this breeze alone would render it impossible for the Corinthians to keep a steady position, which even in still water unskilful seamen find it most difficult to maintain. To distress them yet more, he sailed round their fleet with his ships in single line, gradually contracting his circle, and threatening attack from moment to moment. Confined thus within a narrowing space, the Corinthians were already in great confusion when the wind came down upon them. At once their ships were dashed against each other, while the cries and the shoutings of the crews drowned the voice of the Keleustes, whose office it was to give time to the rowers. In the midst of this serious tumult Phormion gave the order for attack to his seamen, who knew well the vast advantage of keeping strict silence during naval engagements. What followed was not battle, but rout. At every onset from an Athenian trireme, a Peloponnesian ship went down. Twelve were taken, few only of their crews escaping. The few ships which were not captured or sunk fled to the Eleian docks at Kyllene. The Athenians set up at Molykreion a trophy of their victory.

Their complete success

This brilliant exploit, which must have lightened the gloom of the last days of Perikles, roused unmingled indignation at Sparta. Without pausing to think whether, or how far, their defeat may have been due to the superiority of Athenian tactics, the Spartans charged their allies both with sluggishness and with cowardice, and sent peremptory orders to Knemos to bring on a fresh engagement without delay. But decisive as the success of the Athenians may have been, the signs of future mistakes and consequent disasters might be seen with ominous distinctness. To the dispatch announcing his success Phormion added an earnest request for immediate reinforcements. Perikles was now dying; and even before he had passed away from among them, Athenians could be found who had brought themselves to think

Failure of Phormion to receive reinforcements from Athens

that they were doing rightly by sending this force on a contemptible errand to Crete (p. 106). So weak had been the impression made by his reiterated warnings against risking the power of Athens in distant enterprises or for questionable ends, in which even success would for all practical purposes be failure. It was such in the present case. The lands of the Kydoniats were ravaged, but the Kydoniats themselves received no further hurt; and when the Athenians wished to leave Crete for their proper business of reinforcing Phormion, the winds prevented them from pursuing their voyage.

Difficulties of Phormion's position

Phormion was thus left without aid from Athens. It is in a high degree strange that he should have received none from Korkyra. It seems still more strange that he should not have asked for such aid, and that the Korkyraians should not have offered it of their own accord. Thus far, the Athenians had received no advantage from their alliance with this worthless state beyond a co-operation of fifty Korkyraian vessels with their own fleet on the Peloponnesian coast, in the first year of the war (p. 90). The fact of this co-operation is of itself proof that the relations of Korkyra with Athens had gone far beyond the mere defensive alliance at first existing between them. There was therefore no political reason to prevent their helping Phormion, who was now left with his twenty triremes to take his chance against any fleet which the Spartans might send against him. In hourly expectation of receiving reinforcements, he kept his ships off the Molykreion Rhion, while seventy-five Peloponnesian triremes watched him from the opposite Achaian promontory.

For six or seven days no movement was made on either side, the Peloponnesians being afraid of encountering the enemy in the more open waters to the west, the Athenians dreading some manœuvre on the part of their opponents to draw them within the narrow entrance to the gulf. But although the delay was not without benefit for the Spartans, as giving them time for practice, yet the fear that the strength

of the Athenian fleet might at any moment be vastly increased by new arrivals determined them to bring on an engagement at once. Their men, however, were still much depressed by the results of the recent battle; and if Thucydides was rightly informed, Spartan commanders sought to cheer them by dwelling on the experience which they now had of Athenian tactics and on the preparation which they had made for meeting them. In point of numbers they were vastly superior, and a large force of heavy armed troops was ready to co-operate with them on shore. The Athenians had no such force to fall back upon, and they were in fact thoroughly isolated, and burdened further with the responsibility of guarding Naupaktos. Their harangue was brought to an end with a significant promise of reward for those who did well, and of severe punishment for those who might behave ill.

Resolution of the Corinthians to bring on a second battle

It seems unlikely that they should have used such language as this, if they felt that they had well-grounded hopes of success. Phormion's speech was of a very different tenor. The one topic on which he laid stress was the need of ample sea-room for the conflict; and he promised that he would do everything in his power to secure this condition. But his power was no longer equal to his will. On the seventh or eighth day, the Peloponnesian fleet began to move at daybreak, in lines four deep, from Panormos to the northern coast of the gulf, the right wing leading the way, headed by twenty of the stoutest and swiftest of their ships, which were instructed to turn sharply round and pin the fleet of Phormion to the shore, if, thinking that the movement was against Naupaktos, he should enter the gulf. The plan was successful. Phormion felt that he dared not let so large a force attack the town, and hastened to its defence. But he had advanced only a little way beyond the Molykreion Rhion, when the whole Peloponnesian fleet faced about, their vanguard hurrying to cut off retreat in the direction of Naupaktos, while the

Phormion entrapped within the gulf

main body of the ships sufficiently blocked escape to the west.

The safety or destruction of the Athenian armament depended wholly on the rapidity of their movements, and such was the promptitude of the trierarchs and so great the swiftness of their vessels that eleven ships escaped even from this supreme peril, and, outstripping the enemy, hastened towards Naupaktos. The remaining nine were driven ashore, such of their crews as could not swim being all slain. Some of these triremes the Spartans began to tow away empty; one they managed to seize with the whole crew. The battle seemed to have ended in their decisive victory; but another turn was to be given to the day by the Athenian triremes who had escaped the Spartan vanguard. Ten of them, having reached the temple of Apollon near Naupaktos, took up there a defensive position. One was sailing up in the rear, chased by a single Leukadian vessel far in advance of the rest of the Peloponnesian fleet, which came onward to the chant of the pæan hymn of victory.

Defeat of the Athenians

Some way in front of this Athenian ship a merchant vessel was lying at its moorings. Sweeping swifty round it, the Athenian trireme dashed into the broadside of its pursuer and forthwith disabled it. This exploit so dismayed Timokrates, the Spartan admiral, who was on board, that he slew himself, and his body falling into the sea was washed ashore. It also damped the courage of the Peloponnesians who were coming up behind. Their recent success seemed to render the preservation of strict order unnecessary, and with a strange infatuation the crews of some of the ships ceased from rowing to enable the others to join them, while others, from ignorance of the soundings, found themselves among shoals.

Accidental renewal of the fight

Seizing the favourable moment, the ten Athenian ships at the Apollonion flew to the attack. The conflict was soon over. Disorder had already more than half done their work, and in a little while the Peloponnesian ships were seen in

flight for Panormos, near the Achaian Rhion, whence they had advanced in the morning. Six of their vessels fell into the hands of the Athenians, who also recovered their own triremes which had been taken by the Spartans earlier in the day.

Decisive victory of the Athenians

Athenian skill and discipline had thus won two great victories; but the disaster which preceded the second of these victories might have been prevented by the timely arrival of the squadron which was wasting its time in Crete. When at length these ships reached Naupaktos, there was but little left for them to do. Phormion busied himself with strengthening Athenian ascendency in Akarnania, and as the winter drew towards its end he sailed to Athens with his prizes and his prisoners.

Return of Phormion to Athens

Here, in the midst of his glory, he vanishes from our sight, and we may most reasonably conclude that he returned home only to die, or to fall into sickness which cut him off from all active service. A story is indeed told that Phormion, being called on some occasion to submit to the Euthynê, or examination on quitting office, was condemned to pay a fine; that, being unable to discharge it, he underwent Atimia (i. 51, 69) and withdrew to Paionia; that, during his sojourn there, the Akarnanians requested that he might be sent out to them again; and that, as they could not remit the fine, the Athenians assigned him some trifling public service, for which they paid him the amount of his fine.

Story of the fining of Phormion

This silly tale scarcely deserves examination. The penalty to which it refers must have been inflicted either before or after Phormion's first operations in Akarnania. If it had been inflicted before, then the fine cannot have been remitted or evaded owing to any mission of the Akarnanians. If it was inflicted after the formation of his personal connexion with them, to what time can it be referred, or to what cause can it be assigned? The Athenians cannot have fined him for either of his splendid victories, and we hear of nothing in disparagement of the

Worthlessness of the story

pre-eminent reputation which he acquired by them. In short, the tale cannot be made to fit in with his history, and in Thucydides we find a very different account, which implies that Phormion was either dead or incapacitated by sickness when the Akarnanians sent to beg that the commander dispatched to the Naupaktian station might be a near kinsman of the leader to whom they owed so much. The story told by the Scholiast states that, the Atimia being removed, Phormion returned to his old friends; according to Thucydides it was Asopios who went instead of his father. The story of the fine and of its remission or evasion may therefore be dismissed as a fiction; and Phormion remains one of the most illustrious and most successful of Athenian citizens, a man deeply impressed by the policy of Perikles and thoroughly resolved on carrying it out. In his work, so far as it went, he achieved a singular success; but that work was unhappily cut short before it could determine the issue of the great struggle with Sparta.

ARCHIDAMOS

THE language used by, or put into the mouth of, Archidamos in reference to the coming struggle between the Dorian and Ionian Greeks, may be regarded as giving him a title to be reckoned a Spartan statesman as well as a Spartan king. We may even infer that, if his words had carried their proper weight, that struggle might have been deferred or averted altogether. He became king (B.C. 469) on the deposition of his grandfather Leotychides, the victor at the battle of Mykalê (i. 208), who, like so many Spartan leaders, forfeited a great reputation through greed of gold. Leotychides had been sent from Sparta, we are told, to subdue Thessaly, and this means that his mission was to put down the Aleuad chiefs (i. 142) and their Medising partisans. The task for so able a commander was easy; but he chose rather to be bribed than to punish, and, being caught red-handed, he was banished from Sparta, his house was razed to the ground, and his grandson Archidamos, the husband of his daughter Lampito, was put in his place.

Election of Archidamos as Spartan king, B.C. 469

Four or five years later the power of Sparta was shaken by the terrible earthquake which left the hamlets of which the city was composed little more than ruinous heaps. In the revolt of the Helots and Perioikians (p. 17), for which this event furnished the opportunity, the Spartans received from Athens aid obtained for them by the generous but ill-requited zeal of Kimon. But before that aid could arrive, Archidamos had by his presence dispelled the supreme danger. Summoning the

His conduct during the Helot war

Spartans to arms, he took up a position which the Helots thought it imprudent to attack; and the war which followed was rather a besieging of rebels in a stronghold than a struggle in the open field. In the long siege of Ithomè Archidamos played his part with the usual bravery and the moderate success of Spartan leaders.

He had been king for nearly thirty years when the incidents arising out of the quarrel between Corinth and Korkyra showed the imminent danger of a far more serious conflict of races. The signs of a collision between Dorians and Ionians were becoming ominously clear; and from his subsequent conduct we cannot doubt that Archidamos did what he could to soothe angry feelings and to render reconciliation possible. In the meeting of the Peloponnesian allies at Sparta, after the revolt of Potidaia from Athens, Archidamos had listened to the invectives of the Corinthians and the temperate address of some Athenian envoys who happened to be present on some other business. From the former he heard indignant denunciations of the city, which in former times the Corinthians themselves had at least passively defended (i. 53), but which had now become an enemy not to be forgiven. He listened to their statements that in the Korkyraian quarrel the Athenians had acted as aggressors, and that Potidaia in particular had done nothing to provoke the blockade which it was undergoing. He knew that their statements were false, and the knowledge cannot have made him disposed to regard with greater patience the contrast which the Corinthians drew between Athenian energy, versatility, and foresight, and the dilatoriness, obstinacy, and stupid self-complacence of the Spartans. He was not likely to be offended by mere praises of Athens, but he could scarcely wish to be told that in their incessant and well-considered activity the Athenians could afford to despise the laborious idleness of Spartan drill-work, and that thus they fulfilled the purpose of their birth by never resting themselves, or leaving their neighbours in peace.

His attitude in reference to the complaints of the Corinthians against Athens, B.C. 432

In the same debate Archidamos had heard the temperate defence of Athenian policy made by the Athenian envoys, who pointedly disclaimed any intention of defending Athens against the charges of the Corinthians, but confined themselves to the argument of what she had done for the common benefit of Hellas. They reminded the Spartans that they had deliberately declined the task which the Asiatic Greeks had, of their own free will, besought the Athenians to undertake; they bade them remember that great schemes, begun in pure self-defence, cannot always be laid aside when their immediate purpose has been attained, and that if Athens had maintained in her own interests a league to which her allies owed their freedom and their very existence, Sparta, in like manner, took good care to regulate in accordance with her own notions her confederation of Peloponnesian cities. But they insisted more particularly that, although the states belonging to the Athenian alliance must feel in greater or less degree the pressure of a common burden, yet the solid benefits secured to them far outweighed any annoyances to which they might be subjected. It was, of course, true that the allies had been constrained to make some sacrifice of independence. This could not be avoided if the confederation was to be preserved at all; and Athens could not afford to let it be broken up, when she knew that, if it were broken up, the cities now in alliance with her would all gravitate to Sparta and make her absolute despot of Hellas. The subjects of Athens might chafe at the constraint imposed on them as her allies; but the yoke so placed on them was light indeed in comparison of that which they had borne as subjects of the Persian king, or of that which would be laid upon them if Sparta should succeed in ruining her rival.

Arguments in defence of Athens

The speech in which Archidamos set forth his own opinions on the causes of difference between the Dorian and Ionian confederations was delivered not before this open congress, which the Athenian envoys were permitted to address, but

in the secret debate which followed it. Of the former Thucydides may have given us a fairly trustworthy report. There is no reason why he should not have done so. The assembly was public, and he may have received information from those who were present at it. But the case is altered when we deal with the alleged utterances of speakers in a secret council, from which not merely all strangers, but even the allies, were excluded. Still, we cannot be far wrong in supposing that Archidamos spoke on the whole as he is reported to have spoken. If he earnestly deprecated the course on which the Corinthians had set their hearts, this fact could not fail to become known; and the arguments by which, as we are told, he sought to postpone, if not to avert, the struggle, were those which would be used by a man whose political life began about the time when Themistokles was ostracised, and who had not allowed the military conceit of his countrymen to blind his eyes to the real state and tendency of things. Without noticing the accusations and arguments of the Corinthians, this wise and sober-minded prince is said to have placed side by side the strong and weak points in the system and resources of Sparta. In ships, in money, in population and extent of empire, she was no match for the great Ionian city; and the preparation which might place her more on a level with her rival must be a work of time. On a Peloponnesian city they could lay their hands at once; but though they might cross the isthmus and devastate the fertile lands of Attica, this would avail little so long as Athens should remain mistress of the sea; for not only would she obtain from other countries all that could be needed for the support of her people, but she would continue to draw from her allies ample revenues for the maintenance of a navy overwhelming in its strength and unequalled in its discipline. Unless the maritime ascendency of Athens could be put down, it would be absurd to look for the speedy ending of a war which they would, in all likelihood, have to leave as a legacy to their children. Prudence would, therefore, dictate delay, until, at

Speech of Archidamos in the secret debate at Sparta

the least, they could begin the struggle with a reasonable hope of soon winning the victory.

His suggestion to invite Persian aid

At this point the moderation of Archidamos seems to have given place to some intemperance of thought and expression, if in truth he went on to say that in this task of preparation they ought not to hesitate to invite the aid even of the barbarian against a tyranny which was fast becoming unbearable. It is not the first or the second time that we have found Spartans and their allies ready to resort to means and methods which seem utterly unrighteous and even suicidal. Among the inducements for immediate war urged by the Corinthians was the threat that, if Sparta failed to aid them, they might be driven to some other alliance. Possibly this menace points to the step which Archidamos seems to take as a matter of course. If we assume the truth of the report, nothing can show more conclusively the absolute hopelessness of any efforts to combine into a single nation, with a constitutional representative government, tribes in whom the centrifugal tendency was so vehement and even savage. Nor can we shut our eyes to the fact that this tendency comes out in its most exaggerated and offensive form amongst the Dorians not amongst the Ionians, in the oligarchical states and not in the cities where democracy had secured equal rights for all the citizens.

Decision of the assembly in favour of war

But if Archidamos thus expressed his dislike of Athens and her imperial rule, he had no hesitation as to the course which for the moment it was the duty of the Spartans to take. The Athenians had offered to submit all disputes to arbitration. To that tribunal it would be wise, he insisted, to leave the issue The effect of this wholesome advice, if we may trust the account of Thucydides, was at once neutralised by the speech of the Ephor Sthenelaidas, who seems to have done his best to make his countrymen take the great leap in the dark. Sneering at the Athenians as self-praisers, he charged them with making no defence against the accusations brought

against them, although he knew that the envoys had no powers to enter on these topics. The good behaviour of the Athenians during the Persian wars was for him only a reason for visiting their more recent misdeeds with double chastisement. That they had more money, more ships, and more men, was a fact beneath the notice of Spartans, whose allies had received insults calling not for deliberation, but for vengeance. Whether in the cries which followed the speech those who demanded war were in the majority, we cannot say. Thucydides certainly does not tell us so; and the inference seems to be contradicted by the fact that Sthenelaidas felt or pretended to be unable to determine how the decision had gone. He therefore demanded a division; and as some who had cried out in the negative may not have cared to be known personally as opposing the popular sentiment, a large majority was found on the side of the chamber assigned to those who approved of war.

The die was thus cast in favour of the struggle which Archidamos had done his best to avoid. But, as king, he had of necessity the command of the army which was to carry the decision into execution. From the narrative of Thucydides it would seem that the Spartans and their allies entered on the strife with light hearts and high hopes; and when Archidamos addressed the multitudes assembled at the Corinthian isthmus for the invasion of Attica, he found it necessary to confine himself chiefly to the task of restraining their high-wrought expectations. He was leading them forward, he said, under the conviction that they would meet with a terrible resistance in the open field; for, unless he was strangely mistaken, the Athenians were not men who would look on tamely while their richly cultivated lands were being turned into a desert. His general estimate of Athenian bravery was right; in this particular anticipation he was wrong. But, as we have seen, it needed all the influence of Perikles, supported by his most impassioned eloquence, to falsify the hopes or the fears of the Spartan king (p. 88).

Archidamos at the Corinthian isthmus, B.C. 431

When at length the dismissal of the herald Melesippos from Athens without an answer convinced him that nothing further could be looked for from negotiation (p. 89), Archidamos advanced to Oinoê near the little stream of Kephisos, beneath the great mass of Kithairon. The time spent in vain efforts for its reduction served only to increase the suspicions of the Spartans that he was playing into the hands of their enemies. The corn was ripe when Archidamos led his troops on to ravage Eleusis and the Thriasian plain; and then, moving northwards, he put to the test the endurance of the sturdiest and most excitable of the Athenian demoi. His operations caused fierce tumults in Athens; but Perikles succeeded, as we have seen (p. 89), in quieting them, and the invaders retreated just when the Athenians sailed from Peiraieus to ravage the Peloponnesian coasts.

His invasion of Attica. The ravaging of Acharnai

Archidamos was again in command when, after the vernal equinox of the following year (B.C. 430), the Spartans entered Attica to find that their efforts were being furthered by the awful plague which had broken out at Athens. He remained in Attica for forty days, and although some said that he had hastened his return home owing to the pestilence, this seems scarcely consistent with the fact that no other Spartan invasion during the war lasted so long.

Second invasion of Attica, B.C. 430

In the next year he led the confederates, we are told, not to Athens, but to Plataia; but if we may say that this city was invested and taken and its garrison put to death, this is, it would seem, fully all that we can venture to affirm (p. 86). The whole narrative bristles with difficulties. The episode is introduced with all the gravity which it could have if it were one of the determining events of the war; and yet on the issue of the struggle it has absolutely no effect whatever. The Plataians were encouraged in their resistance by the Athenians, who made not the least effort to help allies who had fought with them against Datis (i. 102) and Mardonios (i. 123). The operations

The investment of Plataia, B.C. 429

of the siege are on a scale which pass all bounds of credibility, and we cannot say therefore what trust may be placed in those statements which seem to be likely or probable.

Whatever share Archidamos may have had in the investment of the place, he had nothing to do with the catastrophe which followed its downfall. The invasion of Attica in the following year (B.C. 428) was seemingly the last military operation in which he took part. In the next year his son Agis was commander.

Third invasion of Attica, B.C. 428

His reign, therefore, came to an end not long after the death of his illustrious friend Perikles. Two men were thus removed, almost at the outset of the struggle, who might have moderated its bitterness, and possibly in the end have overcome its exciting causes.

His friendship for Perikles

KLEON

ACCORDING to Aristophanes, Kleon, the leather-seller, was the third of three popular leaders or favourites who exercised something like supreme power at Athens after the death of Perikles. It seems strange that of Eukrates, the first of these three, of whom Aristophanes speaks as a seller of flax, Thucydides has nothing whatever to tell us. Of the second, Lysikles, who is called a sheep-dealer, he has nothing to tell us but the fact of his death in an inglorious battle not far from the banks of the Maiandros (Meander). This Lysikles may perhaps be the man who is said to have married Aspasia, and by her influence to have risen to the highest eminence in the state; but again it is strange that the fact should seemingly be unknown to Thucydides (p. 69).

Eukrates, Lysikles, and Kleon

We may, however, fairly infer that these three men belong to a class now first coming into notice—the class, namely, of statesmen whose activity is confined to popular assemblies, or who are more likely to fail than to win distinction if they venture to play the part of military leaders. In the times preceding the Persian wars, the statesmen and reformers at Athens were as much in their place on the battle-field as in the great gatherings of the people. In Themistokles Athens had the most courageous and skilful of her generals, as well as the wisest and most farseeing of her counsellors. In Perikles she found a man whose real work lay in shaping and guiding her policy, but whose success as a general scarcely fell short of his glory

New class of Athenian statesmen

as a statesman. In Kleon she encountered a man who had no disinclination to criticise the plans or achievements of military leaders, but who vastly preferred to do so at a safe distance from the scene of action.

The fact that such a man could acquire marked influence at Athens is one which calls for careful notice. It is important to know by what means and through whose aid he rose to eminence. We shall find that he so rose not more by the favour of the demos than by that of the party or faction which still represented the old Eupatrid nobility of Attica.

Rise of Kleon to power

By Thucydides Kleon is first mentioned in connexion with events arising out of the revolt of Lesbos; but he had already obtained some notoriety by his opposition to Perikles. He had taken part in the prosecution of the philosopher Anaxagoras (p. 77) and in the measures which led to the fining of his illustrious disciple. In both these tasks he would have the support of the old oligarchic houses. In the treatment of the Lesbians he availed himself of a wider feeling among the people generally; nor can we turn this fact, taken by itself, to his discredit. The revolt of Lesbos, B.C. 428, had been carried out under circumstances which could not fail to rouse the fiercest feelings of indignation in the minds of the Athenians. The Lesbians were now, along with the Chians, the only allies who retained the privileges of free members of the Athenian confederacy; and these allies had chosen for their revolt the time when Athens was stricken down under the plague (p. 101), and had imposed on her the necessity of prodigious exertion just when all exertion was distasteful and irksome. The needful efforts were made, and Mytilênê, the chief Lesbian city, was compelled at length to surrender, B.C. 427; the Athenian admiral Paches pledging himself neither to imprison, enslave, or slay any Mytilenaian until the Athenian people had given their judgement in the matter.

Kleon and the revolt of Lesbos, B.C. 428–7

Their judgement was given on the spur of the moment, and in accordance with the fierce rage with which they re-

garded the conduct of the Mytilenaians, who, having been treated with special indulgence, had rewarded Athens by bringing a Peloponnesian fleet within waters which should have been closed to all armed vessels except those of the Athenian confederacy. No event had yet happened so greatly endangering her maritime empire; and at no time therefore, not even after the revolt of Thasos (p. 16) or of Euboia (p. 48), had the feeling of resentment and the desire of vengeance run so high. Moved by this mastering passion, the Athenians were in no mood for troubling themselves to draw distinctions between the guilty and the innocent, or to apportion degrees of punishment to measures of guilt. All that they cared for was to inflict a punishment which should be a warning to the subjects of Athens for all time to come, and this longing found expression in the proposition for massacring the whole adult population of Mytilênê. One thousand Mytilenaians were already in Athens; probably not less than six thousand more remained in Lesbos. All these were to be slain, and the women and children sold as slaves.

Proposal for massacring the people of Mytilênê

In the assembly called together to decide on this question the fiercest speaker in favour of the plan was, if we may believe Thucydides, the leather-seller Kleon. The words of the historian would, indeed, lead us to infer that it was Kleon who determined the issue of the debate; and we might also be led to think that they implied some moral reprobation of his counsel, were it not that he had just related without a word of comment some horrible instances of treachery on the part of Paches, and were it possible for us to forget that his judgement of character is not always influenced by the morality or immorality of the men of whom he speaks. He never mentions Kleon without a disparaging epithet; but, habitually honest in his statements, he makes no attempt to conceal the fact that for Kleon he had a strong feeling of personal enmity, and that his own character was bound up along with that of the noisy and audacious leather-seller. While then we may fairly test his

Kleon and the historian Thucydides

comments by his history, we may follow his narrative with implicit trust; and his narrative, taken with this reservation, will exhibit in their true light the motives and actions of a man whose portrait has been generally drawn in caricature.

Kleon as a demagogue

The rise of Kleon marks, we have said, a new phase in the political growth of Athens. He comes before us with a title which seems peculiarly his own. He is called emphatically the Demagogue; and for those who will not take the trouble to ascertain its meaning, the word involves some strange misconceptions. In the rough and broad pictures of Aristophanes Kleon is the unprincipled adventurer who rises to power by pandering to the vices of the people and hoodwinking them with the meanest and the most fulsome flattery. No picture could well be more untrue (p. 67); and the false colours with which the comic poet bedaubs the low-born leather-seller may warn us how to interpret the slanders to which he gives vent about the great statesmen whom Kleon made it his business to oppose. Kleon may have risen to power by blustering rhetoric and boundless impudence; he may have held his ground by dealing strong blows against men who fought him with his own weapons; but if we may trust the narrative of an enemy, adulation of the demos is no more a sin which can be laid to his charge than star-gazing can with truth be imputed to Sokrates (p. 69). If he was a demagogue, he was such not as leading the people by honeyed words, but as belonging to a class of statesmen who were only now becoming a power in the state. All Athenian citizens were now eligible to all offices; but in fact the meanly born and the poor seldom filled any offices except those for which election went by the lot. If a man belonging to the lowest class (i. 24) and meaner families of the state wished to obtain a hearing, he could scarcely hope to do so except by enlisting popular feeling on his side and by presenting a firm front to those who might seek to browbeat and to silence him. He must, in other words, carry with him to some extent the sympathy of the people, or he

could do nothing; and then he must trust to impudence or invective to make good the position which he had reached. Nor can we forget that the coarsest abuse was not held to disgrace the most illustrious orators of Athens; and it is hard to see why weapons which Demosthenes might handle without shame should be regarded as unseemly because they were used by Kleon.

The fact is beyond doubt that when Kleon assailed with rudeness and grossness the policy and character of Perikles the offence was readily condoned by the aristocratic party to whom the policy of Perikles was hateful. Thus far Kleon saw a way to power through their dislike of the man who had dealt the last blows to their ancient privileges. In the case of the Mytilenaians he could appeal to a sentiment still more powerful. It was Kleon, we are told, who evoked this feeling; it is far more likely that a large majority came to the debate longing to take the vengeance to which Kleon gave the name of justice.

Opposition of Kleon to Perikles

But the massacre which he and they desired was on so vast a scale that the feeling of rage was speedily followed by a feeling of amazement at the ocean of blood which must be shed in order to appease it. Not a few of those who had voted for it felt, before many hours had passed, that they were about to commit a gigantic and savage iniquity; and at the request of the Mytilenaian envoys, the presidents of the assembly assented without hesitation to the re-opening of the question. It was early morning when Kleon found himself once more face to face with the men who, on the preceding day, had allowed themselves to be carried away by his furious oratory. Again he stood up, not, as comic poets would have us believe, to flatter the demos, but to administer to them a fierce rebuke, and to insist on the paramount duty of giving full play to the instinct of resentment. This passion, he argued, was apt to grow weak with time, and their business was to throw themselves back as much as possible into the feelings stirred in them by the first tidings of the wrong done to them by the Myti-

Kleon's plea of justice for the men of Mytilênê

lenaians. This course he held to be that of strict justice, and as he demanded no more than justice, so neither would he take less. That against the Lesbians he had a terrible indictment it is impossible to deny. But Kleon, if we may trust the report of Thucydides, uttered a direct falsehood when he asserted that the oligarchs and the demos had been guilty of the same crime, and therefore deserved the same punishment. The plea was palpably untrue. It was true that the oligarchs had put arms into the hands of the demos, but they had not done so until they felt that no other escape from absolute ruin was open to them; and no sooner had the demos grasped their weapons than they used the power thus gained in the interests of Athens.

To this vehement outburst Diodotos, who had strenuously resisted the proposal carried on the preceding day, replied in a speech which, if we may accept the account of Thucydides as substantially correct, is amongst the most remarkable ever uttered at Athens, or perhaps anywhere else. It is the speech of a man comparatively humane, who yet feels that overmuch stress laid on the duty of mercifulness might defeat his purpose, and who fears the effect of enjoining as a duty that which was demanded imperatively on the ground of mere policy and expediency. The question turned, as he insisted, not on the wickedness of the rebels, but on the wisdom or the folly of slaughtering them in a mass. If they were far worse than even Kleon had painted them, the case would not be altered, for they were assembled not to pronounce judgement on the conduct of the Mytilenaian people, but to come to a decision as to the measures which might be either necessary or desirable in the interests of Athens. He would go further. He would take Kleon on his own ground, and he would meet by a flat denial the plea that the interests of Athens could in the smallest degree be advanced by ruthless massacre. It was absurd to found expectations of future gain on the mere severity of punishment. Human conduct was determined not by pains and penalties which might possibly never be inflicted, but by

Counter-arguments of Diodotos

desires or passions which bear down all constraints of prudence, law, or fear. The black codes, which had but the one penalty of death for all offences, had not been particularly successful in lessening the number or the atrocity of offences. But if there was, and must be, a complete uncertainty as to the results of merciless revenge in one direction, there was no sort of uncertainty as to its effects in another. The slaughtering of a whole people for the misdoings of a small section of that people would clog with insuperable difficulties a task already anxious and delicate. Far from being tempted, as they were now, to surrender betimes in the hope of moderate treatment, the knowledge that they could look for no consideration of shades of guilt would goad revolted allies to desperate resistance, and even success would mean for the Athenians a woeful waste of time and money in blockades, and the barren possession of a heap of ruins when the siege was ended. If Kleon really had the welfare of his country at heart, he would wish to see her the mistress or the ally of states capable of bearing their full share of the common burdens; but he was insisting on a line of action which, if it were persisted in, would, in place of the great Athenian confederacy, leave useless heaps of ruined cities. Nay, even this would not be the whole mischief wrought by this ill-judged vindictiveness. In all the states of her alliance, Athens now had, beyond all doubt, a body of staunch friends; and even in Lesbos these friends had only been overborne by the selfish violence of the oligarchic faction. If they followed the advice of Kleon, they would be dealing the deathblow to this friendship, and for their folly they would encounter everywhere an ominous monotony of hatred and disgust.

It is something to know that the arguments of Diodotos prevailed over the mere brute force of the rhetoric of Kleon.

Victory of Diodotos

When the question was put to the vote, the amendment of Diodotos that the prisoners then in Athens should be put on their trial, and that the lives of the Mytilenaians in Lesbos should be spared, was carried by a very small majority. By exertions almost incredible, the crew of

the trireme carrying this message of comparative mercy reached Lesbos just when Paches had read the decree of execution, but before he had begun to act upon it. Here, however, ended the repentance and the forbearance of the Athenians. The thousand Mytilenaians whom Paches had sent as prisoners to Athens were put to death in cold blood. All that can be urged in palliation of this deed is that these prisoners belonged to the oligarchic party, and were really responsible for the revolt, and that it was obviously impossible to prevent them from doing further mischief except by keeping them in prison, by selling them as slaves, or by putting them to death. Probably the last of these was the most merciful; the first, to a state in the position of Athens at this time, would certainly be too costly.

Kleon and the comic poets

In Diodotos, Kleon had a straightforward opponent, who was content when the people chose what seemed to him the right course. He had other enemies who were not so easily satisfied, and who had more formidable means for annoying him. The oligarchic party, who had found him sometimes a convenient instrument, could have but little sympathy with him on the whole; and the comic poets, whose sympathies lay chiefly with the oligarchs, were even less indulgent. During the winter which followed the execution of the Mytilenaian prisoners at Athens, Aristophanes, in his lost play of the 'Babylonians,' so far reflected on him that Kleon resolved to try the question at law. The story comes to us on no better evidence than that of the comic poet himself, who says that one count of Kleon's indictment charged him with speaking evil of the state in the presence of its subject allies. Whatever may have been the result of this suit, Kleon, it seems, underwent rougher handling in his own person, when the Dikastery condemned him to disgorge a sum of five talents which he had contrived to squeeze out of some of the islanders.

These incidents, however, seem to have had but little effect on his position. He remains still the blustering speaker, who, far from fawning upon or flattering the people, seems

to bully them into the adoption of his views; and he uses such influence as he has with the most disastrous effects upon the welfare of Athens. Almost by accident, the Athenians had become masters of Pylos, a spot on the west coast of Peloponnesos, not much more than fifty miles from Sparta, and had shut up a large body of Spartan hoplites in the islet of Sphakteria, B.C. 425. Many of these heavy-armed soldiers belonged to the first families of Sparta; and the certainty that, unless they could be promptly rescued, they would be taken prisoners produced such an effect at Sparta that the Ephors themselves hurried to Pylos to arrange a truce until envoys sent with proposals for peace should have returned from Athens.

Imprisonment of Spartan hoplites in Sphakteria, B.C. 425

At Athens, the events which had occurred at Pylos caused almost as much astonishment as they had at Sparta. A few days only had passed after the premature retreat of the Spartan invading army, when the Spartan ambassadors arrived to sue for peace with a tone of moderation little in harmony with their general character. Their disasters in Sphakteria had suddenly opened their eyes to the value of forbearance and kindliness, and, indeed, to the general duty of forgiving injuries. They had learnt (if we may believe the report of their speech as given by Thucydides) that it is dangerous to carry a quarrel too far, and that a generous use of unexpected good luck was the surest means of converting an enemy into a stedfast friend. Such good luck had now fallen to the fortune of the Athenians; and it was their duty to improve the chance to the uttermost by granting a peace, which, as founded on feelings of genuine gratitude on the one side, and of Hellenic brotherly kindness on the other, could not fail to be lasting.

Spartan proposals for peace

In these professions of kindly feeling towards the Athenians, the Spartans were, no doubt, perfectly sincere. Adversity often teaches some very wholesome lessons, and the Spartans never spoke more to the purpose than when they said that the time for the ending of the war was come. They had, indeed, forgotten, or they

State of feeling at Athens

did not care to dwell on the fact, that when Athens was down under the scourge of the great plague they had contemptuously dismissed the Athenian envoys who came to sue for peace (p. 103); but many of the more moderate citizens were content to overlook this inconsistency in their wider regard for the permanent interests of Athens and of the Greek world generally. Unfortunately, among these moderate citizens not one, it seems, was to be found who had courage enough to force these interests on the attention of the people. Perikles, had he been now living, would have insisted that the honour of Athens must be amply vindicated; but he would have insisted, not less earnestly, that no unnecessary hindrances should be placed in the way of a settlement which Athenians might make not only with satisfaction, but with self-respect. It is not improbable that he might have urged again the importance of making fresh attempts to bring about a Panhellenic union (pp. 36, 108), although not much was to be expected from such attempts amongst a people radically incapable of getting beyond the life of cities. But Perikles was dead; and Kleon was living, with a spirit unchanged from the day when he demanded the slaughter of the friendly demos as well as of the rebellious oligarchy of Mytilênê.

Proposals of Kleon

The account which Thucydides gives of the part taken by Kleon in the debate is marked by his personal animosity to the man. Introduced a second time (and therefore superfluously) with all the particularity of a first notice, Kleon is represented as declaring that the Athenians could not with honour demand less than the surrender of the Spartan hoplites in Sphakteria, and that, after they should have been brought as prisoners to Athens the Spartans might make a further truce pending negotiations for a permanent peace, on the one condition of giving back to the Athenians Nisaia, Pegai, Troizen, and Achaia, which had been extorted from them long before the beginning of the war (p. 43).

In making this demand it would be very hard to say that

Kleon was either wrong or unjust. The possession of Achaia was for the Athenians a matter of indifference so long as they had in Naupaktos the key of the Corinthian Gulf; but on the surrender of the Megarian ports they had a full right to insist. These ports were the key to the isthmus, inasmuch as Megara could never stand alone, and without Megara and the harbours belonging to it they could not prevent the Spartans from throwing armies into Attica at their will.

Justice of his demands

To these demands the envoys had probably no authority to give any direct reply, but no rejection of them was implied in the request for the appointment of commissioners to discuss the terms with them. This step would in no way involve the least surrender of the great advantage which Athens had so unexpectedly gained. The Spartan fleet was in their hands, the Spartan hoplites had no means of escaping from Sphakteria, and the movement of a Peloponnesian army against Pylos would not only vitiate the armistice, but practically insure the destruction of the men whose safety they had most at heart. But Kleon was always on the watch to avail himself of currents of popular feeling to further his own particular ends. In the case of the Mytilenaians, he had played upon the feeling of fierce irritation arising from a causeless revolt on the part of a state which had been treated with exceptional kindness. He availed himself now of the sentiment which springs from a natural elation on success as decisive as it has been unlooked for. In turning this feeling to the recovery of the Megarian ports, he was using it for a thoroughly justifiable purpose; but he was really, though it may be unconsciously, playing a traitor's part when, on hearing the request of the Spartan ambassadors, he burst into loud and indignant denunciations of what he called their double-dealing.

Request of the Spartan envoys for the appointment of commissioners

He had, as he is reported to have said, suspected from the first that they had come with no good intent; he was now sure that they wished only to cheat and mislead the

people, and in their presence he charged them to say out forthwith whatever they might have to say. The envoys were taken by surprise. Popular debates were things unknown at Sparta, and the uncultured discipline under which their lives had been passed left them little fitted to cope with the rhetoric of loud-tongued speakers or to plead their cause before a vast assembly. Nor, unhappily, had any citizen of the moderate party the courage to demand that the request of the envoys should be submitted to the decision of the people. This was, beyond a doubt, a matter with which they were as competent to deal as with the question whether the Mytilenaian people should or should not be slaughtered; and it was as much within the competence of any of the more moderate citizens to assert that their request for the appointment of a commission was a proof of their good faith, as it was within that of Kleon to hold it up as evidence of their duplicity. If it be urged that the popular sentiment was too clearly against such a concession (if, indeed, it can be called a concession) to make it prudent to take such a course, this only proves that the Athenian people had advanced far towards that state in which the uttering of smooth things confers a stronger title to favour than the telling of the truth. But there is nothing in the narrative of Thucydides to give countenance to any such notion, and anyone taking up this position against Kleon might have done so without administering to the people rebukes so severe as those which Kleon dealt to them in the matter of the Mytilenaians.

Invective of Kleon against the Spartan envoys

There was, indeed, on the part of the moderate citizens at this juncture a grave dereliction of duty. It was their business to deny the right of Kleon to impute evil motives to the ambassadors for requesting that they might be allowed to confer with commissioners. Nor would they be without justification if they further denied his right to assume that questions of this kind could be fitly discussed in a large popular assembly; and they might have insisted that, although the people must

Remissness of the moderate citizens

in the last resort sanction or reject the arrangements made by the commissioners, the preliminary stages would be better left to a few citizens specially selected for the task. Of these citizens they might have urged that Kleon himself should be one, and it was doubly unfortunate that such a proposal was not made. So far as we know, it was not even thought of. Had it been made, Kleon could not have repeated his impudent assumption, inasmuch as it must have called forth the obvious retort that his words must be made good by some show of proof.

Dismissal of the envoys

While the citizens of Athens were thus woefully remiss in their duty, we can well understand that the Spartan envoys would be deterred from saying anything, lest, in case of failure, their words should be misconstrued and their motives misrepresented among the allies of Sparta. The debates in which Kleon was opposed to Diodotos show that he was no mere fawner or flatterer of the people; and the sequel of the strange drama of Pylos will show that he is not always to be charged with rash or presumptuous confidence. But the bold and bluff speaker is not always necessarily in the right, and Kleon, in bringing about the contemptuous dismissal of the envoys, was deplorably in the wrong. The Athenian people chose to follow him; but nations living under very different governments have been misled not less seriously and with no more difficulty.

Prolonged resistance of the Spartans at Sphakteria

So was thrown away a chance of bringing to an end honourable for Athens a struggle which had caused her a vast amount of suffering. Kleon saw it pass without compunction. He had, it seems, no doubt that the surrender of the hoplites in Sphakteria was only a matter of days; but he was most disagreeably undeceived. Everything seemed to favour the Athenians; but in spite of this, the resistance of the Spartans was prolonged, and the prospects of the Athenian commanders became singularly dark and gloomy. They were at once felt to be so at Athens when tidings came announcing not that Sphakteria had been taken, but that the hoplites within it were

well supplied with food and water, while their own men were beginning to feel the pinch of want. The winter season would soon make it impossible for the Athenian fleet to remain on the coast; and when the fleet was gone the hoplites would soon escape in the light boats which now brought them food, while the Athenians on the mainland at Pylos would be starved into surrender.

The feeling of elation caused by the mission of the Spartan envoys had given place to dark forebodings, and the popular feeling ran strongly not, as it should have done, in the channel of self-accusation, but, according to the fatal Athenian fashion of shifting all responsibility upon advisers, against Kleon. Kleon was, indeed, sorely perplexed, and his opponents, who had done nothing to counteract his folly or his presumption, were in the same measure delighted. At the spur of the moment he charged the messengers from Pylos with falsehood; but he felt that he had made a wrong move when they asked that commissioners should be sent to test the truth of their report, and that Kleon should be one of the number. The dilemma was awkward. If he went he must either eat his own words if their account should be found correct, or be soon convicted of a lie if he dared to put a better face upon the matter.

Perp'exity of Kleon

Then followed a scene which singularly illustrates that state of political feeling in the oligarchic party at Athens which was afterwards to be fruitful in the most terrible disasters. In bringing about the dismissal of the Spartan envoys, Kleon had been foolish and wrong. But the question now was how to insure the safety of the garrison at Pylos. This question concerned all Athenians alike, and in the consideration of it levity and banter must lie dangerously near the borders of treachery. With all his faults, and with all his reckless readiness to impute falsehood to others, Kleon was nevertheless right in telling the Athenians that, if they believed the news just brought to them, their duty was to sail without a moment's delay to help their countrymen and seize the Spartan hop-

His charge to the generals present in the assembly

lites in Sphakteria; that if the Strategoi then present (i. 65) were men they would at once do so; and that, if he were in their place, he should not waste an hour before setting off.

This reference to himself was, at worst, only indiscreet; but Nikias, instead of feeling that Kleon was doing no more than pointing out his clear duty as strategos, answered glibly that, if the task seemed to him so easy, he would do well to undertake it himself. Kleon answered that he was ready to go, and in so saying he was again, perhaps, guilty of indiscretion; but he can be charged with nothing more, and his fault was more than atoned when, on seeing that Nikias really meant to yield up his authority to him, he candidly professed his incompetence for military command. It was the first time that such a confession was made by an Athenian citizen, and the circumstance points to the rising of a new class of statesmen, whose activity was confined to the popular assembly.

Offer of Nikias to yield up his command to Kleon

Nikias, however, insisted on giving up his place to Kleon; and the eagerness of the people to ratify the compact was naturally increased by the wish of Kleon to evade it. On the conduct of Nikias we have to reserve our judgement. But, noisy and arrogant as he may have been, Kleon would not despair of the commonwealth, and he at once said that, if he must go, he should set out on his errand without any fear of the Lakedaimonians, and with the full assurance that within twenty days he would return home either having slain, or bringing with him as prisoners, the Spartans now shut up in Sphakteria. He added that he would take with him only the force of Lemnians and Imbrians then in the city, with the peltasts from Ainos, and four hundred archers.

The promise of Kleon to return within twenty days

The bitter animosity of Thucydides against the man who was mainly instrumental in bringing about his own banishment could not tempt him to suppress facts; but it led him to indulge in feelings and in language which, apart from this ground of irritation, he would have scouted as unworthy of an Athenian. Kleon had done no more than

Criticism of Thucydides

assert that Athens was able to do that which Nikias held to be impossible; and Thucydides stigmatises this assertion, and his confident anticipations of success, as tokens of madness. Kleon further took care to demand as his colleague the general who had planned the enterprise at Pylos. He could scarcely have shown sounder sense or greater modesty than by so doing; and Thucydides can tell us, seemingly without any feeling of self-condemnation, that Kleon's speech was received by the Athenians with laughter, and that sober-minded men were well pleased with an arrangement which could not fail to insure one of two good things—either the defeat and ruin of Kleon, or a victory over their enemies which might open a way for peace. Even more astounding than this is his statement that the ruin of Kleon was what these sober-minded men especially desired. In the judgement of Englishmen these sober-minded men would assuredly be mere traitors; but it is hard, if not impossible, to believe that the words of Kleon were received with laughter by the whole body of the Athenians, and we are driven to the conclusion that in this instance personal jealousy has betrayed the historian into a distortion, or at least into the exaggeration, of fact. The laughter came probably only from the members of the oligarchic clubs, and from those who were afraid of offending them.

The fulfilment of Kleon's promise

At Pylos, Kleon found himself among men who were not less ready than the Athenians at home to fall in with his plan of immediate and decisive operations. The military arrangement he left, with the sound sense which he had shown at Athens, to his colleague, Demosthenes; and these arrangements were brilliantly successful. Four hundred and twenty hoplites had been cooped up in Sphakteria when Kleon arrived with his reinforcements. Of these, 292 lived to be taken prisoners, and of these, again, not less than 120 were genuine Spartans of the noblest lineage. The loss of the Athenians was trifling; the work was done; and, within twenty days from the time of his departure Kleon re-entered the harbour of Peiraieus, bringing with him

the costliest freight which had ever been landed on its shores. If Herodotos had been telling us the story of this stirring drama, he would have given us a series of vivid pictures and anecdotes illustrating the enthusiastic welcome which the demos gave to the man who had not been infected with the fears or the treachery of the oligarchic faction, the bright hopes of a coming peace which should soon obliterate the marks of recent ravage from the pleasant fields of Attica, and the firmness with which, in spite of their anxiety to be rid of the war, they were resolved to maintain the dignity and the honour of Athens. From Thucydides we have nothing more than the curt comment that the mad pledge of Kleon had been literally redeemed.

Conduct of Nikias and his followers

On this verdict of Thucydides we need say but little. Disgraceful though it may be, it is not nearly so disgraceful as the conduct of Nikias and his partisans in compelling Kleon to undertake a work which they regarded as fit only for a madman, and for which he candidly confessed his incompetence. The judgement of the historian is, in short, the judgement of his party; and it proves not the insanity of Kleon, but the political immorality of those who would have it that ten thousand Athenians under a general singularly fertile in expedients, popular with his men, and supported by precisely the kind of force which he most needed, could not hope to capture four hundred Spartans who were cut off from all possibility of escape by a hedge of the enemy's ships and the forfeiture of their own navy.

Aristophanic picture of Kleon

Thucydides is not the only man who has misrepresented or defamed Kleon. About six months after his return from Sphakteria, Aristophanes exhibited at the Lenaian festival his comedy entitled the 'Knights,' or 'Horsemen.' This piece won the first prize. With its surpassing merit as a play we can scarcely imagine its failing to do so. As a libellous comedy, it has perhaps never been equalled either in ancient or modern times. In this drama, Kleon appears as a Paphlagonian slave, so called not

from any desire to call into question his pure Athenian descent, but to exhibit him as a rude, spluttering, bubbling, boisterous clown, who, having gained his master's ear, makes the lives of all around him miserable, while he takes care to turn everything to his own advantage by wholesale pilfering and cheating. The picture, as a whole, exhibits Kleon in the character of a thief, a taker of bribes, a browbeater of all decent men, a lying accuser of the innocent.

In short, it proves a great deal too much. We may take our choice between some of these features and the rest. We cannot accept them all. The man who had made himself notorious by bullying, slandering, and falsely accusing others would find it impossible to thieve, swindle, and receive bribes safely and habitually on his own account. If, again, these had been his habits, he would be far more likely to connive at the evil doings of others in order to screen his own, than to drag before public tribunals men of whose guilt he was not sure. There is nothing improbable in the anecdote related by Plutarch, that at the outset of his political career Kleon, summoning his friends together, told them that his friendship with them must be regarded as at an end, because the tie which bound him to them would interfere with the discharge of his duty to the state. But in the statements of Aristophanes the likelihood of anything related by him is exceedingly small. The unrivalled comic merit of the 'Knights,' it has been well said, is only one reason the more for distrusting the resemblance of its picture to the real Kleon. As portraits of historical personages, his delineations deserve no notice at all. If the characters of men are to be blackened, we may at least demand that the picture drawn by the accuser or the critic shall be consistent with facts already known to us from other sources. But the elaborate picture drawn of Sokrates in the 'Clouds' is not only a distortion or exaggeration of facts. It is, to speak judicially, an absolute lie. At the outset Sokrates may have used language which might give some countenance to the imputations of Aristophanes;

Its absurd extravagance

but the repetition of these insinuations at a later time would be as near the truth as a biography which should represent Lord Strafford as to the last an uncompromising opponent of despotism. Except at the outset of his career, of which we know very little, Sokrates, far from being a dreamy and absent star-gazer, spent his life in protesting against all astronomical speculations, and, indeed, against all physical inquiries generally. We are, therefore, at once acquitted of all obligation even to examine personal charges brought against any other men whom Aristophanes chooses to hold up to contempt, ridicule, or hatred; but there are few instances in which an examination could fail to exhibit his statements as worthless gossip or deliberate slander.

The absurd contradictions involved in his references to Perikles have been noticed already (pp. 67, 70). He is not less inconsistent in what he says of Kleon. The main charge in the 'Knights' is that Kleon first thrust himself into the office of general and then impudently reaped another man's harvest, and stole away his honours. But Thucydides hated Kleon more vehemently perhaps than Aristophanes can have hated him, and from Thucydides we learn that the office was thrust upon him sorely against his will and against his repeated protests by men who seriously wished to make a joke of the destruction of an Athenian fleet and army; and, secondly, that, far from wishing to rob Demosthenes of his credit, Kleon took special care to have that general as his colleague, and left to him both the plan and the execution of the attack. Between these two men there is every appearance of hearty co-operation; but from the moment of his arrival at Pylos Kleon is wholly subordinate, of his own free choice, to the experienced and gifted commander who had planned the enterprise. The modest position thus assumed by him is more creditable to him than anything else in his history.

Contradictory statements of Aristophanes and Thucydides

The issue of the attack on Sphakteria naturally increased the influence of Kleon. Unhappily, his success added weight

to it just in those points which lay most open to censure and most loudly called for condemnation. Kleon had been wrong in interposing hindrances to the conclusion of peace; but in the debates which preceded his mission to Pylos it was seemingly the personal influence of Kleon alone which turned the scale in favour of war. Now not a voice was raised in behalf of peace, and Nikias especially was debarred by his recent conduct from venturing on the utterance of warnings which would now have been seasonable and wholesome. The utter disgust for the war which marks the 'Acharnians,' a comedy exhibited by Aristophanes about six months before the victory of Kleon, or rather of Demosthenes, had given place to the more confident temper which finds expression in his play of the 'Horsemen.' The Athenians could now, with the Spartan prisoners in their hands, make peace whenever they might choose to do so. For the present they did not choose, and new obstacles to any agreement were interposed by the activity of Brasidas (p. 90).

The 'Acharnians' and 'Horsemen' of Aristophanes

This most un-Spartan Spartan was working for the benefit of his country with all the zeal and with little less than the sagacity of Themistokles and Perikles, and he was doing so without the support and encouragement which these leaders received from the Athenian people. The Spartans, with their habitual dulness, failed to understand the schemes of Brasidas, and either left him to his own resources or thwarted his plans. Even thus he succeeded in shaking the Athenian confederacy almost to its foundations. By baits held out to the oligarchic faction in each city, and by statements which Thucydides characterises as downright falsehoods, he brought about the revolt of Akanthos, and then, appearing suddenly before Amphipolis, offered terms which, as he had the surrounding country at his mercy, could not be resisted.

Thraceward campaign of Brasidas, B.C. 424

For the Athenians this city was a position of the utmost importance, and it was lost to them by the inexcusable neglect of the Athenian commanders on the Thrakian coast.

Kleon, it is said, was prominent in the prosecution which ended in the twenty years' banishment of one of them—the historian Thucydides. If he had anything to do with the matter, he was perfectly right; and we may do him this justice, even if we look for no further evidence in his favour than the significant silence of the historian. Thucydides nowhere attempts to justify himself, though he ventures on a lame attempt to palliate his fatal remissness. But the consciousness of his fault could not conquer his feeling of resentment, and this feeling has coloured his whole account of the career of Kleon.

Revolt of Amphipolis

The ninth year of the war (B.C. 423) found both sides wearied with the struggle. Brasidas alone was full of an enthusiasm to which the very thought of peace was inexpressibly distasteful; but his countrymen cared nothing for his day-dreams and felt no pride in his exploits, and among the Athenians there was seemingly not one to insist on putting out the whole strength of the city for the summary crushing of his schemes. All that the Spartans cared for was the recovery of the hoplites taken in Sphakteria, and under this overwhelming anxiety they drew up a document which provided for a twelve months' truce, on the main condition that during the year each side should retain the possessions belonging to it at the moment of ratification. The terms were accepted; but the commissioners sent to Brasidas to announce the truce found him in possession of Skiônê, another town which he had induced to revolt from Athens.

Truce for a year between Athens and Sparta, B.C. 423

A reckoning of the time showed that this acquisition had been made since the ratification of the truce, and the Athenian commissioners refused to recognise it as coming within the terms of the treaty. Brasidas boldly resorted to falsehood, and his falsehood, believed at Sparta, caused bitter irritation at Athens. Once more the people were summoned to sit in judgement on the citizens of a revolted town; and this time it would seem that even Diodotos felt that his intercession would be of no avail. He

Disregard of the truce by Brasidas

may also have thought that the conduct of the Skionaians admitted of no excuse or palliation. Kleon proposed and, with little opposition or none, carried a decree dooming them to the punishment to which the Mytilenaians had been sentenced. The decree was carried out, but not until after Kleon had been removed from the scene.

Mission of Kleon to oppose Brasidas

That the recovery of Amphipolis and of the other Thrace-ward cities was an object for which Perikles would unhesitatingly have put forth the whole power of Athens we cannot doubt. The Athenians seem to have been of the same opinion; but their action was not prompt, and their choice of a commander was, to say the least, strange. The man sent to oppose a general so gifted as Brasidas was the leather-seller Kleon. That this appointment was not made without strong opposition is highly probable, if not certain; but, passing over the details of the debate in silence, Thucydides merely says that Kleon spoke much as Perikles would have spoken, and that he was himself sent on the errand. He adds, however, that the warlike policy of Kleon was prompted by the fear that, in a time of peace, his iniquities would be more easily brought to light and the falsehood of his slanders more readily exposed and rebutted. But the facts which we are bound especially to note are these—that, after an interval of nearly three years, a man who had never put himself forward as fitted for military command, and had, indeed, frankly admitted his disqualifications for it, and who, in a task of singular difficulty, had been successful because he had the good sense to subordinate himself to a leader of real genius, is now sent on a far more dangerous service without the aid of such a colleague. We may well ask why this should be; and the answer must be that the citizens, of whom Thucydides speaks as the sober-minded section of the community, had, during the whole sojourn of Brasidas in Thrace, been throwing cold water on the policy which would have had the sanction of Perikles, and had urged that the most effectual mode of counteracting Brasidas was by making peace.

We can scarcely question that Kleon insisted on the futility of such a course. The man who had contemptuously or defiantly disregarded the truce was not likely to show much more reverence for a more deliberate and formal covenant. The truce was a short peace, and Brasidas had cared nothing for it. The peace would be a long truce; would he care for it any the more? So much for the matter as it affects Kleon personally; but we cannot fail to see, further, that for his opponents the condition of things singularly resembled that which had gone before the Sphakterian enterprise. Now, as then, there was an obnoxious man to be got out of the way; now, as then, there was a work to be done, in which success would benefit Athens, while failure, though it might ruin Athens, would bring comfort to the men who hated Kleon.

Attitude of the opponents of Kleon

It is hard to think that we are doing any injustice to Nikias and his partisans if we say that the old trick was employed again, and that they deliberately thrust Kleon into an office which he did not covet, and from which he shrank, but in which they hoped and thought that he would ruin himself. This shameful and treacherous policy, we are assured, was openly avowed before Kleon's departure for Pylos, and we have therefore no real grounds for questioning that, the phenomena being the same, they were prompted by the same disgraceful motives once more. The fact that Kleon had not been employed in the interval is, surely, sufficient evidence that he had not sought employment; and it is to the last degree unlikely that he would now eagerly seek an office to which he knew that he had no other title than that which any citizen would have who desired to maintain the honour and the true interests of his country. In the first flush of victory after his return from Pylos, Kleon, had he been so minded, could, we can scarcely doubt, have had himself elected strategos for the campaign of the following year. The fact that he did not come forward as a candidate must be taken as proof that he

Their real motives and expectations

had, generously as well as honestly, relinquished to Demosthenes the credit for the success at Sphakteria.

But, while we may without injustice ascribe to his opponents a repetition of the old stratagem, we must, at the same time, set aside the judgement which Thucydides passes on Kleon as untrue in fact. It would, indeed, be well if we knew a little more about the iniquities and slanders of the leather-seller; but if, as it is, to say the least, possible, the sting of his oratory lay in charges of feebleness or supineness urged against Nikias and his abettors, we cannot deny that their conduct went far to provoke, if not to justify, such uncourtly comments. But it is not true to say that for such a man as Kleon is here asserted to have been war involved a state of things more convenient than peace. War tends to encourage, not political slander, but military genius; and Kleon was thoroughly aware, and candidly confessed, that very little military genius was needed to eclipse his own. He had, indeed, protested against the remissness or indifference which would have left Demosthenes without help at Pylos, and his protest was perfectly right, quite apart from any reference to the result; but it cannot be said that his policy was uniformly in favour of war. Before the beginning of the struggle, which had now lasted for nine years, Kleon was strenuous in his efforts to maintain peace in opposition to the plans of Perikles. In insisting now on a vigorous prosecution of the war in Thrace, Kleon was taking a line in which he would have had the cordial support of that great man; and we may very safely infer that he went in person to Thrace only because Nikias would not go.

Unjust criticism of Thucydides

It was long after the summer solstice when Kleon left the Peiraieus with a force of twelve hundred heavy-armed citizens, three hundred horsemen, and a larger number of allies in thirty triremes. Touching first at Skiônê, he took away some of the hoplites belonging to the force engaged in the siege of that town, and reached Torônê just in time to prevent the Spartans from

Arrival of Kleon in the Thraceward regions

throwing themselves into it. The tiger-like rules of ancient warfare made every home in Torônê desolate; and while fathers, brothers, and husbands went into captivity, mothers and wives, with all the children, were sold as slaves.

In his next attempt, which was made upon Stageiros, Kleon failed; but the Thasian colony of Galepsos was taken by storm. He felt, however, that he could not venture to advance upon Amphipolis with his present forces; but while, to the disgust of his men, he waited at Eion, Brasidas, in order to guard Amphipolis, took up his post on the hill of Kerdylion, on the western bank of the river, facing the city and commanding a view of all the land around it. Blunder after blunder now followed; but the disgrace of these blunders lies less with Kleon than with those who sent him on a task which he would far rather have seen in abler hands. Whatever his mistakes were, we see them at their worst, for he had a merciless critic in the historian whom he helped to drive away from his country.

Delay of Kleon at Eion

Kleon was manifestly at a loss how to act. His troops were becoming impatient, and he was driven at last to the course which had led to success at Pylos. This course, it is hinted, was nothing more than marching up a hill for the purpose of marching down again; and even this manœuvre, the historian contemptuously adds, Kleon regarded as a trick worth knowing. The wall of Amphipolis, forming the chord of the arc within which the city lay, ran across the ridge which rises to the eastward until it joins the Pangaian range. This ridge Kleon, for the sake of doing something, felt himself compelled to ascend; and no sooner was his army in movement than Brasidas left Kerdylion and entered Amphipolis across the bridge over the Strymon, which he had included within the fortifications of the city.

Entry of Brasidas into Amphipolis

What the anticipations of Kleon may have been we cannot say. Thucydides asserts that both at Pylos and at Amphipolis Kleon looked for no resistance. This is certainly

untrue in the matter of Sphakteria; and we have no satisfactory reason for ascribing to him any such impression at Amphipolis. At Pylos Kleon knew that he had a sufficient force to overcome any opposition that might be made, and that in Demosthenes he had a colleague far more able and experienced than himself. At Amphipolis he had no such colleague, and he knew also that he had no overwhelming superiority of numbers, while he also felt that of his men many were not well disposed towards himself. His fault here was not over-rashness, but a culpable failure in maintaining the discipline of his army, and in putting his troops in strict order of battle before he began his retreat.

Position and difficulties of Kleon

For the entry of Brasidas into Amphipolis Kleon is in no way responsible. Before Brasidas first made his way to Amphipolis, the bridge was altogether unconnected with the town; and the separation of the two reflects great discredit on the Athenians for leaving so important a post open to surprise from an enemy. In his account of the battle of Amphipolis, Thucydides does not distinctly state that the bridge was included within the fortifications of the city; but his whole story implies that it was, nor is any hint given that Kleon could attack the bridge without assaulting the town, as he might easily have done if the two had been disconnected. The defence of an isolated bridge needs, moreover, a stronger guard and involves more anxiety than the maintenance of a line of wall including the bridge. A bridge so guarded would naturally be the first object for attack; but Kleon evidently had no option, and his regret at having come to Amphipolis without besieging engines had reference only to an attack on the walls.

Kleon before Amphipolis

It cannot, however, be supposed that Kleon was unaware of the enemy's change of position from Kerdylion to the city. It is more likely, from the scanty numbers of the men who entered with Brasidas, that he did not attach much weight to it. We cannot suppose that he knew much of the theory of strategy; and assuredly

Miscalculations of Kleon

he knew nothing of it by experience. It was, therefore, an easy matter to dupe him by that semblance of inactivity and of inability to act which to a wary and able general would carry with it the strongest suspicion. On reaching the top of the ridge from which he had an unbroken view of the city at his feet, and of the river as it flowed out of the lake Kerkinitis and, sweeping round the city, ran into the sea at Eion, he was struck by the silence and quiet of the scene. Nowhere throughout the whole extent of country over which his eye ranged were any bodies of men to be seen in motion; not a man was visible on the city walls; not a sign betokened preparation for battle. At length his scouts came to tell him that under the city gates they could see the feet of horses and men ready to issue out for battle.

Having by personal inspection satisfied himself that their report was true, Kleon resolved not on maintaining his ground, which he might have done with almost a certainty of success, but on a retreat to Eion. He must await, he said, the reinforcements which he expected from Thrace; and thus his army, wheeling to the left, began their southward march with their right or unshielded side exposed to the enemy. Rushing out from the gates, the Spartans broke the Athenian ranks.

Battle of Amphipolis

The left wing of the latter fled, and Brasidas fell in the pursuit of them. On the right wing their resistance was more firm; but Kleon, we are told, had come without any intention of fighting, and he made up his mind at once to run away. Flight, however, is not always as easily executed as it may be planned; and Kleon, it is said, hurrying away from the men whom he had undertaken to lead, was intercepted and slain by a Myrkinian peltast. It is possible that the event may have taken place as Thucydides has related it; but, although he has nowhere suppressed facts or introduced falsehoods, the history of Kleon is so coloured in his pages that we may reasonably question whether the end of this loud-voiced and unrefined politician was as ignominious as he describes it to

Deaths of Brasidas and Kleon

have been. Nor can we easily smother the suspicion that his left wing, which fled at the first attack of the enemy, may have consisted of those men who, politically opposed to Kleon, had disliked the idea of serving under him, and had shown their disgust by the insubordination which had always been the besetting sin of the oligarchic hoplites.

Judgement of Thucydides on Kleon

We are told by Thucydides that this battle removed the two great hindrances to a pacific settlement between Athens and Spárta; but he makes no effort to show that peace at the cost of sacrifices, which Kleon was not willing to make, was at this time to be desired for Athens. His blunders and shortcomings, his bluster, his arrogance, his incompetence as a military leader, are, indeed, exactly registered; but whether the energetic prosecution of the war in Thrace was or was not necessary, whether the line taken by the political opponents of Kleon was one which Perikles would have approved, or whether it was one against which he would have protested as involving virtual treason, he takes care never to ask. From first to last, in fact, in his account of the career of Kleon, we have not a trace of that judicially balanced criticism which marks his sketch of Themistokles; and we are left to discover for ourselves whether and how far in the several stages of his course Kleon was right or wrong. We have not a word to show that he was less justified in his treatment of the Spartan ambassadors who came to Athens immediately after the occupation of Pylos by Demosthenes (p. 139) than he was in urging the immediate reinforcement of that general's army after the rupture of the truce.

Probable facts of the case

Happily, the unswerving honesty which never allows Thucydides to suppress facts has shown us that, when Kleon charged the first envoys with deliberate falsehood, he was disgracing himself and running a risk of fatally injuring Athens; that, when the truce was once broken, he was perfectly right in insisting that, at whatever cost, the Spartan hoplites in Sphakteria should be brought prisoners to Athens; that he was again wrong

when, after they had been so brought, he hindered the settlement of peace by imposing conditions too exacting and severe, but that in this instance his mistake was shared by Nikias and the oligarchic party, who at this moment were all run away with by the war fever; and, finally, that from first to last he was more than justified in the policy by which he held that Brasidas must be encountered and put down in Thrace. That he was left to carry out this policy by himself was his misfortune, not his fault; that he was feebly supported at Athens and sent without competent colleagues to Thrace redounds not to his own shame, but to that of his adversaries.

BRASIDAS

THE career of Brasidas, like that of Kleon, is spread over a few years only; and apart from his public life we can scarcely be said to know anything about him. But from the first moment of his appearance on the scene of the great Dorian and Ionian struggle we have a singularly distinct and complete picture of the man as a military leader and also as a statesman such as Sparta had never yet seen and, it may perhaps be said, such as she was never to see again. The fact that nothing is heard of him during the negotiations and conflicts which preceded the outbreak of the war may be taken as evidence of his extreme youth at the time; and in this case he must still have been in the bloom of mature manhood when he fell on the same day with Kleon at Amphipolis.

Character of Brasidas as a statesman

During these few years, circumstances, it may be said, favoured the developement of those qualities which have won for him the peculiar distinction of being the most un-Spartan of Spartans; but circumstances not less favourable failed to produce the same results with others of his countrymen, and therefore we must conclude that there was something in Brasidas himself which determined the character of his life, and which made him scarcely less ready in speech than in action, and gave him almost too much skill as an orator and a diplomatist, while it brought him to the highest eminence as a military leader and strategist.

Singularity of this character in a Spartan

His name is first heard of at the beginning of the great struggle between Athens and Sparta. The splendid career of Perikles was already dimmed by the clouds which were darkening round him; and with a heavy heart, though with undiminished confidence in the policy which he had marked out for Athens, he had sent out the fleet which was to ravage the Peloponnesian coasts. Landing on the south-westernmost promontory of Messene, the Athenian attempt to carry Methônê (p. 90) by storm gave an opportunity for the first exploit of Brasidas. The walls were weak, and men were lacking to guard them; nor could the place have escaped speedy capture, had not Brasidas, who held a Spartan outpost in the neighbourhood, dashed through the Athenian force, and, with some little loss to his men, thrown himself into the city. The Athenians were scattered carelessly about the place, not expecting such sudden and impetuous movement; but the promptitude and sagacity now displayed by this young officer were an earnest of a long series of military exploits, all of them conspicuously marked by these qualities and standing out in strong contrast with the ordinary achievements of Spartan citizens. Of men like Leonidas and, in some degree, like Archidamos, there had never been any lack; but Brasidas was the first Spartan in whom a rigid discipline had sharpened instead of repressing a genius of no mean order.

Rescue of Methônê by Brasidas, B.C. 429

The merit of this brilliant exploit at Methônê was fully appreciated at Sparta. Brasidas received a public eulogy and was elected Ephor Eponymos. Two years later (B.C. 429) he was one of the commissioners sent to form a standing council for Knemos after his crushing defeat by Phormion at the entrance of the Corinthian Gulf (pp. 112, 115). In spite of his presence and advice, Phormion won a second victory; and it then occurred to Brasidas that a harder blow on Athenian power might be struck nearer home. The suggestion of a night attack on the harbour of Peiraieus itself came from the Megarians; but it was eagerly adopted by Brasidas, whose

Failure of the design of Brasidas to surprise Peiraieus B.C. 429

orders, if carried out, might have resulted in a terrible [redacted] strophe for Athens. The allies were commanded to haste[n] the Megarian port of Nisaia, and there to man the forty tri[-] remes, now scarcely seaworthy, which were lying high and dry in dock. Thus far the orders of Knemos and Brasidas were obeyed; but when they were fairly at sea, the desperate risk involved in carrying out their scheme led them or their men to substitute for it the easier task of a raid on Salamis. The capture of the three Athenian guardships at the promontory of Boudoron was made known at Athens by means of fire-signals, and excited extreme alarm. The impression in the city was that the enemy's fleet had entered the harbour of Peiraieus, while the inhabitants of Peiraieus believed that Salamis was taken and that they might expect to be attacked at any moment. No sooner had day dawned than the Athenians hurried in full force from the city to the Peiraieus and, launching a number of triremes, rowed off to Salamis. But the enemy had departed, taking with them the three guardships, with a large amount of plunder and many prisoners.

Brasidas had taught the Athenians a severe lesson, and the Peiraieus was not left unguarded again. It was probably the fault of his colleagues, not his own, that the enterprise failed to inflict a fatal blow on Athens.

Brasidas at Korkyra, B.C. 427

He was not more successful as the colleague or controller of Alkidas, the admiral sent in command of the Spartan fleet to Korkyra (B.C. 427). The great struggle between the Dorian and Ionian Greeks was everywhere becoming more exasperated; and the besetting sins of Hellenic polity were being brought out into greater prominence and aggravated by foreign interference, the demos in each town inviting the aid of Athens, while their opponents relied on that of Sparta. It was so now in Korkyra, where the revolution which ensued was noteworthy as being the first and fiercest of these movements. Brasidas was again thwarted by his colleague's lack of promptitude, and the revolution at Korkyra ran its horrid length into wholesale massacre. By sailing straight to Korkyra, as Brasidas desired, Alkidas might have

carried everything before him; but, to his great disgust, the admiral contented himself with going to Sybota and with ravaging the lands near Leukimmê for a few hours the next morning.

We next see Brasidas striving to give a better turn to the difficulties in which the Spartans were involved by the enterprise of the Athenian general Demosthenes at Pylos (B.C. 425). The hoplites, who were afterwards taken as prisoners to Athens (p. 144), were landed on Sphakteria. A force on land tried in vain to take the fort built by the Athenian sailors under the command of Demosthenes; but a more formidable attack on the Athenian position generally was made by the Spartan ships under Thrasymelidas. The Athenians were greatly aided in their resistance by the rocks and reefs which gird this dangerous promontory, and the captains of the ships felt and displayed a natural reluctance to risk the destruction of their vessels. Furious at the sight, Brasidas asked them whether for the sake of a petty saving of some timber they meant to allow the enemy to establish himself in their country; while on the allies he urged the duty of sacrificing, if need be, every ship belonging to them, as a small return for the long series of benefits which they had received from Sparta. Insisting that his own ship should be driven straight upon the beach, he took his stand on the gangway ready to spring on land, feeling sure that a Spartan force, having once gained a footing on the shore, would at least take care to enter the fort along with the Athenians whom they would drive back, and there decide the matter in a hand-to-hand combat. But in this position he was exposed, before he could strike a blow or even attempt to leap on shore, to showers of darts and arrows. Struck down with many wounds, he fell back fainting into the forepart of the vessel, with his left arm hanging over the side, and his shield slipped off from it into the water. Dashed up presently by the waves on to the beach, it was seized by the Athenians, who with it crowned the trophy raised after the battle.

Brasidas is wounded, and loses his shield at Pylos, B.C. 425

But the courage and spirit of Brasidas never failed him, although his countrymen seemed to have lost both. A terrible story is told of wholesale massacre perpetrated on the Helots, many of whom had shown marvellous boldness and sagacity in conveying food to the hoplites shut up in Sphakteria. There are indications which seem to show that the tale may be greatly exaggerated. We find Helot hoplites not many months later serving under Brasidas in Thrace, and we cannot easily understand how the Spartans could venture on placing arms in the hands of men whose kinsmen they had lately smitten down in cold blood. The question must remain wrapped in obscurity; but, if the facts are correctly stated, the free Spartans must have been possessed of coercive powers of which we can form no adequate idea.

Brasidas and the Helots

In the opinion of Thucydides, they were suffering at this time from a paroxysm of selfish fear. Many of their noblest men were shut up in Sphakteria. They knew, therefore, that the spell which once lay in their name had been rudely wrecked, if not broken, and they felt that the good fortune which they regarded as their birthright was gone. Whether such a state as Sparta was worth saving is a question which, perhaps, we need not answer; but it seems certain that it must have fallen if it had not been for the singularly un-Spartan genius of Brasidas. His larger mind saw that only a diversion of the Athenian forces to some distant scene would loosen the iron grasp in which they now held the Peloponnesos. Such a diversion was rendered practicable by invitations which came from the towns of the Chalkidian peninsula as well as from the Makedonian chief Perdikkas. These invitations were accompanied by the offer of maintenance for any army which might be sent to aid the cities in the plan of revolt from Athens, and it is scarcely necessary to say that they came from the oligarchic faction in each of those cities.

Invitations to Brasidas from the Thraceward allies of Athens, B.C. 424

The Spartans were well pleased to intrust the task to

Brasidas, whose coming the Chalkidian oligarchs made a special condition in the compact; and Brasidas, on his part, if only he could be supreme in command, was none the less eager to measure himself against the enemy because the Spartans, paralysed by the catastrophe of Sphakteria, refused to allow any more of their own hoplites to run the risk of swelling the number of captives at Athens.

Brasidas left to raise a voluntary force for his enterprise

But before he could complete his levies his interference was needed nearer home. A minority in Megara had probably felt all along that union with Athens was better than independence under an oligarchy. This minority had been strengthened by the sufferings which the war had entailed upon them, and a plan for the surrender of the city was concerted with the Athenian generals. The latter recovered Nisaia by capitulation before the work of blockade had well begun. But to Brasidas it seemed that a blow should be struck before they could obtain possession of Megara itself. When, however, he demanded that the gates should be thrown open to his forces, the answer was that they would admit no one within the walls until one or other party should have gained a decisive victory.

Strife of parties in Megara

The next step of Brasidas was, therefore, to advance nearer to the sea and offer battle to the Athenian generals. But the latter, on their side, began to question whether they could run the risk of a defeat, which might be most severely felt, in order to encounter a force composed simply of detachments levied from many Peloponnesian cities which would lose at the worst only a small fraction of their troops. The fall of Nisaia had cut off the connexion of Megara with its long walls, and as Brasidas showed no intention of acting on the offensive, they gave up all notion of attacking the city. The gates were accordingly opened to admit the army of Brasidas; but this restless leader had more urgent work to do elsewhere, and on his departure the demos remained under a solemn pledge of amnesty on the part of the oligarchs.

Admission of Brasidas into Megara

These kept their promise only until both Spartans and Athenians were fairly out of the way, and then tried, condemned, and executed a hundred citizens who had been most prominent in the work of opposition. A strict oligarchy was set up which, Thucydides tells us, lasted much longer than most governments set up by a minority both numerically and personally insignificant. Before the close of the year the Megarians regained possession of their long walls and levelled them with the ground, and thus a work was demolished by means of which the Athenians had hoped that they would be enabled to keep a firm hold on the Peloponnesos.

Destruction of the long walls of Megara

A storm was now to burst on the Athenians from the north, of which they seem to have had no forebodings. We may safely say that certainly they had none, for they chose this time for making another attempt to recover the land empire which they had lost by their defeat at Koroneia (p. 42). In the simplicity of the plan and in the co-operation promised by the demos in many Boiotian cities there was much to favour the enterprise; but the plan came to an end with the disastrous battle of Delion, and, unhappily, the scheme itself left the way open for Brasidas to give a wholly new turn to the war by his plan of wresting from Athens her subject allies on the northern shores of the Egean.

Attempt of the Athenians to recover their supremacy in Boiotia

While the Athenians were still putting out their strength in Boiotia, Brasidas sent from the Spartan colony of Herakleia a message to his partisans in Pharsalos requesting them to furnish him at once with guides for his march through Thessaly. That he was undertaking a dangerous task he was well aware. In Thessaly, as in Boiotia, the oligarchic chiefs of clans carried matters their own way; but they could not repress the friendly feelings which the main body of the people entertained for the Athenians in their struggle with Sparta. In other words, the same elements were working here as in the allied cities whose revolts had already been

Preparations of Brasidas for his march through Thessaly

suppressed, and Brasidas knew that nothing but a promptness which should leave no room for discussion or even for thought could enable him to carry out his plan. At no time was it easy for a foreign force to make its way through Thessaly without guides; in the present temper of the people the attempt would be doubly dangerous. As it so turned out, the whole power of the oligarchic governments barely sufficed to carry him through.

Hindrances to his march at Pharsalos

Setting out from the Phthiotic town of Melitia, he had scarcely reached Pharsalos, in the centre of the great Thessalian plain, when he was met by a large body of the people, who seemed determined to bar his further progress. To their plea that no stranger could pass without the consent of the commonwealth the guides of Brasidas hastened to answer that they would not think of leading him any further against their will, and that they had brought him thus far only because his sudden appearance had taken them by surprise, and they knew not what else they could do. Brasidas himself now came forward, and with that singular power of adapting himself to the temper of his hearers which no Spartan had ever yet displayed, assured them that, if they wished it, he would forthwith turn back; but added that he should regard it as churlish treatment if he were sent back, since he had come not to hurt the Thessalians, with whom the relations of Sparta were both peaceful and friendly, but merely to carry out plans for the humiliation of the Athenians, with whom they were at open war.

These words, we are told, disarmed the opposition of the Thessalians; but if this be a complete account of the matter, the readiness with which they allowed him to pass onwards showed that their professed friendly feeling for Athens was a sentiment rather than a principle. Freed thus from a serious danger, Brasidas lost not a moment in hurrying onwards. In a few hours he reached Phakion; in the evening he was in the territory of the Peraibians, who guided him to Dion, in the dominions of

Arrival of Brasidas at Dion

Perdikkas. Here, standing in safety beneath the mighty ramparts of Olympos and the Pierian hills, Brasidas looked forward with eager impatience to the immediate prosecution of the enterprise for the sake of which he had made this perilous journey.

His only wish was to cripple Athens; but the wily chief who had lured him by the promise of maintaining half his army looked upon him as a hired instrument for doing any work which he might have in hand. Sorely against his will, Brasidas was sent to reduce Arrhibaios, the chief of the Lynkestai. But the latter expressed a wish to submit himself to arbitration, and to become the ally of Sparta; and Brasidas, in spite of prayers and protests, withdrew his forces. Perdikkas was compelled to depart with him, but he showed his anger by supplying henceforth the wants of only a third portion of his troops.

Campaign against the Lynkestai

Not until Brasidas had passed the Thessalian border were the Athenians awakened to a sense of their danger and even when they learnt that something must be done, they acted with a tardiness and hesitation in marked contrast with the vehemence and promptitude of the Spartan champion. The preservation of the subject allies on the coasts of Thrace would have been for Perikles a matter to be carried through at all costs; but, instead of striving with the energy of men struggling for their lives, they contented themselves simply with increasing their garrisons in the cities threatened by Brasidas.

Hesitation and inertness of the Athenians

The ripe grapes were all but ready for the gathering, and the whole produce of the year was therefore at his mercy, when Brasidas appeared before the gates of Akanthos, at the base of the great peninsula of Akte or Athos. The oligarchic party, at whose invitation he had come, had led him to look for an eager and even enthusiastic welcome. He was unpleasantly surprised to find that the gates were guarded, and that he could do no more than pray for permission to plead his cause before the people

Brasidas at the gates of Akanthos

in person. Even with this request the demos only reluctantly complied. Once admitted, he was to employ again those arts of persuasion which might tempt the ignorant into thinking that Sparta was training up a body of citizens like the adroit orator who now stood forward as the apostle of freedom and happiness for everybody. His business was to convince the Akanthians that they could secure their own welfare only by revolting from Athens, and he proceeded to convince them after the following fashion.

Address of Brasidas to the Akanthians

Reminding them of the wholly disinterested motives which had led Sparta into the war, he assured them that the state which had sent him was honestly anxious to confine itself to the one definite task of putting down an iniquitous tyranny. He had come to set them free, and he was amazed at not finding himself welcomed with open arms. Their coolness caused him even greater grief and alarm; but, although he took care not to tell them at this point in his speech that it excited in him some feelings of a harsher sort, he explained to them that their adhesion was indispensable for the success of his plan, and their adhesion therefore he must have. Their refusal would tempt the other allies of Athens in those Thraceward regions to think that the freedom which he promised was Utopian, or that his power to insure it was not equal to his will; and he could not afford to allow such thoughts to be awakened in them. The power of Sparta he brought home to them by telling, as Thucydides declares, a flat lie—a lie which he repeated wherever he went. When the Athenian generals, under the walls of Megara, determined not to risk a battle with the army of which the forces of Brasidas formed a scanty part, their resolution was taken simply on the ground that they were bound not to endanger the best troops of Athens in a struggle with men gathered from a number of cities, each of which risked but little. Of this fact it is barely possible that Brasidas may have been unaware; but he knew himself to be deliberately lying when he spoke of his own troops as being the whole force which the Athenian generals dared not

to encounter, and urged this as a ground for thinking that the Athenians could not send to the coasts of Thrace a larger army by sea. Their confidence he sought to gain for Sparta by assuring them that he had bound the Ephors by the most solemn oaths that the cities which might join him should remain absolutely autonomous. It may not, perhaps, have occurred to him that the need of imposing such oaths might leave on others the impression that the Spartan magistrates were not much to be trusted without them; but he did not tell them then that some of the men in his own force were the kinsfolk of bondmen, who had risked their lives to succour Spartan hoplites in Sphakteria, who had been invited to claim freedom as the reward of their generous self-sacrifice, and who, having thus shown themselves to be men whom it would be dangerous to keep in slavery, had, every one, been mercilessly murdered (p. 162).

Final arguments of Brasidas

Two further arguments he had yet in store. The one was addressed to that centrifugal instinct which pre-eminently marked the Hellenic race in general; the other to their purses. He assured them that when he spoke of freedom and independence his words were to be taken in their literal meaning, and not as denoting merely liberation from the yoke of Athens. They would be left absolutely to themselves, as unconstrained, in fact, as the oxen which parted company by the advice of the lion who hungered after their flesh. They were to live after oligarchic or democratic fashion, as they might prefer. They would be free, after joining Sparta, to manage their own matters to their own liking; they were perfectly free to decide now whether they would or would not join Sparta. Only they must remember that, as things then were, a large amount of money went yearly from Akanthos in the form of tribute for the support of a tyranny which his conscience would not allow him to tolerate; and, further, they saw his army outside their walls. He would leave them to their deliberations; but if they should say him nay, their ripe grapes would be trampled under foot, their vineyards ravaged, and they must

make up their minds to face poverty, perhaps famine, perhaps also a blockade.

This forcible special pleading carried so much weight that a majority of the citizens, voting secretly, decided on revolt from Athens. The Akanthians were not men of heroic mould, and they could not bring themselves to sacrifice their crops; but they were so lacking in enthusiasm for their new ally, that they insisted on his taking in their presence the oaths which, as he said, he had imposed on the Spartan Ephors. The wretched farce of free debate and free voting was ended; and Akanthos revolted from Athens.

Revolt of Akanthos from Athens

Brasidas had begun his work well, and Stageiros, a few miles further north, soon followed the example of Akanthos. Not many weeks later he appeared before the walls of Amphipolis. The possession of this place would remove the last difficulties from his path; and it was his object to detach it, if possible, from Athens without the toil of a siege in which he might very probably fail, and which would not, in all likelihood, be brought to an end before the arrival of an Athenian armament. The post was as strong and as easily defensible as it was important. Above the city, the lake through which the Strymon flows was a formidable barrier for those who had not the command of the sea. Below this lake a squadron of Athenian triremes was permanently on guard; and the city itself was at a moderate distance from the bridge which furnished the only means of communication between Makedonia and Thrace. On two sides of it flowed the broad stream embracing the town for which it thus determined the name, and leaving only the chord of an arc fortified with a strong wall along its whole length. On no object could time, care, and money have been better bestowed than on insuring the safe keeping of this key to two vast regions: by an astonishing infatuation it was allowed without a struggle to fall into the hands of Brasidas.

Brasidas appears before Amphipolis

Led by guides from Argilos, this indefatigable commander

advanced to the bridge, and of course slew the scanty garrison to which alone the fatal sluggishness of the Athenians had intrusted the momentous duty of guarding it. So sudden was the attack and so complete the slaughter that no alarm could be given to the citizens of Amphipolis, who, on a stormy and snowy night, learnt that the army of Brasidas was without their walls, and that their lands and all who happened to be without the city were wholly at his mercy. So great was the confusion that Brasidas, we are told, might with ease have carried the place by assault; but he allowed his men to plunder the land instead.

Surprise of the bridge

The citizens who were not on his side had thus time to recover their self-possession. These now found that they were still in a numerical majority; and they not only insisted that the gates should be kept shut, but that the Athenian general Eukles should send a request for immediate aid to his colleague, Thucydides, the historian, who was then with his fleet off the island of Thasos, about half a day's sail from Amphipolis. With a feeling, we cannot doubt, of deep misgiving and self-accusation, Thucydides hastened to the post which he ough never to have quitted after the arrival of Brasidas in Macedonia. Trusting that he might reach Amphipolis in time to save it from falling into his hands, he hoped that at the worst he should be able to rescue Eion.

The citizens send to summon Thucydides to their aid

But Brasidas was beforehand with him. He knew that for a large proportion of the citizens alliance with Sparta had no attractions, and that in these men the presence of a general so wealthy and powerful as Thucydides would raise hopes of more effectual succour and stir them up to more stubborn resistance. He therefore offered terms which he thought could not fail to determine their action in his favour. All who chose to remain should have the full rights of citizenship. To those who might prefer to depart he gave five days for the removal of their property. Such terms were not likely to be withstood. Brasidas became master of Amphipolis. In twenty-four hours he would have

Surrender of Amphipolis to Brasidas

been master also of Eion; but on the evening of the same day the seven ships of Thucydides entered the mouth of the Strymon, and this fresh loss was avoided.

The year was closing with a series of misfortunes and discouragements for the Athenians. From one side the tidings came that the Megarians had levelled their long walls with the earth; from the other they learnt that Sane and Dion were the only towns on the peninsula of Athos which had refused to receive Brasidas within their walls. But it was not worth while for the latter to spend time in catching so poor a prey, and he hurried away to Torônê, whither he had been invited not by the main body of the people, but by a small band of conspirators working with careful secrecy. Their aid was effectual. The small Athenian garrison escaped to the fort of Lekythos, and hither also fled those Toronaians who could not make up their minds to join Brasidas. But their resolution was shaken when, on the next day, Brasidas invited them to return, under a pledge that they should enjoy the full rights of citizenship.

March of Brasidas to Torônê

To disarm any remaining opposition, he summoned a public assembly and made a speech much after the fashion of his harangue at Akanthos, insisting that the men who had introduced him within the city were to be regarded not as traitors, but as benefactors and saviours of their country. So disinterested were his motives that he was come to set them free whether they liked it or not, and those who had opposed him should share the blessing not less than his most zealous partisans. Nay, he should think none the worse of the former for their friendly leanings towards Athens, for he knew that they would soon entertain a heartier friendship for the Spartans. He was willing to draw a veil over the past. Thus far they had not been in any true sense free agents; for the future they would lie under the responsibility of free men, and faithlessness to Sparta would be followed by righteous punishment.

Address of Brasidas at Torônê

Having dealt thus with the citizens, Brasidas proceeded to apply the argument of force to the Athenian garrison in

Lekythos. The fort was stormed, but most of the Athenians escaped in the two guardships. It was at this juncture that the truce was made on which the Athenians raised high hopes which were doomed to be disappointed (p. 149). Two days after the ratification of this truce, Brasidas received the adhesion of Skiônê. Under cover of a convoying trireme which would divert the attack of any Athenian ship which they might encounter, he sailed to the town, where he was eagerly welcomed by his partisans. It is not pretended that the subject allies of Athens were drawn to the imperial city by any other considerations than those of sound reason and sober judgement; and reason and judgement are the first to lose their power over a people dazzled by schemes which appeal to sentiments thus far kept under control, yet not without irksome self-restraint.

Revolt of Skiônê from Athens, B.C. 423

The campaign of Brasidas had now acquired a romantic character, and the politic harangue in which he lauded the boldness of the Skionaians in defying the efforts of Athens made them look on themselves as fellow-workers with him in the sacred cause of liberty. When he told them that their conduct would be rewarded with the special confidence and esteem of the Spartans their enthusiasm burst the slender barriers of prudence, behind which some had wished thus far to shelter themselves. In the place of public assembly a golden diadem was placed on the head of Brasidas, the Deliverer of Hellas; in private houses he was crowned with fillets and honoured as an athlete who had reached the highest standard of Hellenic humanity. For the present the sky was fair; but the enthusiasm of the Skionaians was to end in terrible catastrophe.

Triumphant reception of Brasidas in the Skionaian assembly

It was not likely that in the full swing of such an enterprise as that which he had so nearly carried to a successful issue Brasidas would allow himself to be suddenly checked by hindrances interposed from without. His readiness, as Thucydides phrases it, in stating what was not true would give him an advantage over more

Brasidas and the year's truce

truthful men in dealing with disagreeable circumstances. In such circumstances he now found himself when the commissioners arrived from Sparta and Athens to announce the twelve months' truce. The representatives of Athens declared, on a reckoning of the time, that Skiônê had revolted after the close of the war. Brasidas boldly denied the fact; but the irritation excited at Athens led to the election of Kleon as strategos for the campaign which was to bring back the Thraceward subjects of Athens to their allegiance (p. 150).

Revolt of Mendê from Athens

It was not long before the town of Mendê followed the example of Skiônê, and Brasidas without hesitation received the city into the Spartan confederacy. The act was virtually an open declaration of war against Athens, but he sought to give some colour to it by charging the Athenians with breaking the terms of the truce; but how they are supposed to have broken them we are not told. The genius of Brasidas for fiction or falsehood makes it possible or likely that the only infraction of the terms of truce may have been their refusal to acknowledge that the revolt of Skiônê occurred a few days before it actually took place. But, although he professed to regard the open revolt of Mendê after the news of the truce had been received as a justification of his conduct, he felt that the plea would avail little with the Athenians. He therefore transferred the women and children to the town of Olynthos, a few miles to the north-east of Potidaia. But, although he sent a force to guard Mendê against attack by an Athenian army, he did not enter the place himself, and therefore he failed to awaken in the citizens that feeling of personal attachment which gave his cause a fictitious strength in the cities which he had already visited. Probably a soothing speech from his lips might have prevented the collapse which followed after the arrival of the Athenian generals during his absence in Makedonia.

Thither he was now summoned to aid Perdikkas against the Lynkestian Arrhibaios (p. 166). We must suppose that

the invitation was one which he could not afford to disregard. Refusal would have been followed on the part of Perdikkas by at least the repudiation of all engagements to contribute towards the maintenance of the army of Brasidas. Advancing with him to the passes of Lynkos, Perdikkas learnt to his dismay that the Illyrian mercenaries whom he had engaged had been induced to transfer their services to his enemies. In the confusion which followed, Perdikkas was hurried away before he could even catch sight of Brasidas, who was left face to face not only with the Lynkestian chief, but with a horde of savages whose very name chilled the blood of the somewhat less ferocious Makedonian clansmen.

Difficulties of Brasidas in the passes of Lynkos

Without losing his self-possession for an instant, Brasidas formed his hoplites into square, placing the light-armed troops in the centre, while with three hundred picked men he brought up the rear himself. Addressing them in a short speech, he told them that only the peculiar circumstances of the case would have drawn from him any words at all. It was the duty of Peloponnesians to face any enemy, however overwhelming their numbers might be; but as these Illyrians had gained an exceptional name for savagery and cruelty, he thought it right to remind them that barbarians generally knew nothing of strict discipline or of the duty of standing each by the other to the last. Their warfare, he said, was that of men who fought for themselves alone, and who were as free to run away as they were to fight. He might have added that they were thus far in the condition of the Achaian warriors who followed Agamemnon and Menelaos to Ilion; but he chose rather to impress upon them that the polity of Sparta sufficed to show how a few men, holding their lands by the right of the strongest, could keep down immense multitudes, and that men so trained and disciplined had no reason to dread the attack of savages, who trusted more to the din of their yells and war-cries than to stoutness of arm and steadiness of aim.

Encounter with Illyrian mercenaries

For the sake of Brasidas, and of the Spartans generally, we may hope that he spoke much as Thucydides has reported him to have spoken. It must not be forgotten that some of those whom he addressed under the general title of Peloponnesians were kinsmen of the Helots who are said to have been murdered in return for their good services at Sphakteria. Such language seems to tell against the truth of that terrible story (p. 168). The feeling of fellowship may grow up between a conquering and a conquered race in the course of generations; but that the Helots would thus, in a few months, identify their own interests with those of the Spartans, when they had not the slightest warrant that they themselves might not be served after the same fashion, verges closely on the bounds of the incredible.

His address to the Peloponnesians

The expectations of Brasidas were in this instance verified. The Illyrians, coming in sight of his puny army, rushed on with their usual clamour; but they found that their shoutings had no effect on the iron ranks of the Peloponnesian rear-guard. Their onslaughts were so vigorously repulsed that they speedily found it more profitable to chase and slay the followers of Perdikkas, and then to hasten onwards in the hope of occupying the sides of the pass through which Brasidas must march to reach the open country. But the quick eye of the Spartan leader soon saw on which of the two heights the barbarian force was weaker, and he gave the order to his Three Hundred to charge up the hill, as best they could, without caring to keep their ranks, and to dispossess the Illyrians by mere force and weight. The success of this vigorous measure seems to have convinced the barbarians that further pursuit was useless. The way was thus left open for the Peloponnesians, who, during the rest of the march, wreaked their wrath on Perdikkas by appropriating the baggage-waggons which his followers had in their haste left behind them.

Defeat of the Illyrians

The events which followed the departure of Brasidas on the errand of the Makedonian king explain and justify the

reluctance with which he had marched against Arrhibaios. While he was still entangled in the wild passes of Lynkos, an Athenian fleet under Nikias and Nikostratos sailed from Potidaia against the Mendaians, who, with a force from Skiônê, had taken up a position on a strong hill without the city. The attempt made to dislodge them failed, and for the present the Athenians seemed to be baffled; but the weak side in the system of Brasidas was now to be brought out into clear light. He had come as a preacher of freedom; it was now to be seen that the natural consequence of his exhortations was dissension and sedition. The Athenians were ravaging the land, and the Spartan commander, Polydamidas, drawing out his own troops in order of battle, summoned the Mendaians to sally out against the enemy.

Appearance of an Athenian fleet before Mendê

But the spell of Spartan authority was broken; and in an evil hour Polydamidas ordered the arrest of a citizen who cried out that he had no intention of serving against the Athenians, and that the war was merely a luxury for the rich. This insult drove the demos to seize their arms, and to surprise their antagonists who had conspired to bring the Peloponnesians upon them. The Spartan garrison thus attacked fled to the acropolis, and the Athenians burst into Mendê fiercely eager for revenge. Leaving men enough to carry on the siege of the acropolis, the Athenian commanders went on to Skiônê. But before this town could be effectually blockaded, the Spartans managed to escape from their stronghold at Mendê, and most of them succeeded in entering Skiônê without attracting the notice of the Athenians. An ineffectual attempt of Brasidas on Potidaia closed the operations of this unwearied leader for the winter.

Recovery of Mendê by the Athenians

In the following year he learnt without dismay, yet, perhaps, not altogether with contempt, that the man pitted against him by the Athenians was Kleon. He may have known that in the forthcoming campaign Kleon would lack the help of Demosthenes; but he must have remembered

that Kleon, candidly admitting his own inferiority as a general, had shown not a little discretion in availing himself of the knowledge and experience of others. What he had done once he might do again; and thus a man, in no way formidable himself, might turn out to be no despicable antagonist. But his opinion may have been a good deal changed when he found that, instead of advancing on Amphipolis, Kleon was wasting his time at Eion. He had also, in all likelihood, heard that the Athenians had little confidence in their general, that they despised his timidity, and resented his inaction; and his task clearly was to watch for an opportunity of surprising him when discontent and want of discipline had thrown his army sufficiently into disorder.

Brasidas receives tidings of the appointment of Kleon

Kleon, as we have seen (p. 153), failed to prevent Brasidas from entering Amphipolis by the bridge which that leader had included within the fortifications of the city. Brasidas had now seen enough to convince himself that he would best further his own ends by a simulation of extreme weakness. In point of numbers his own force was equal to that of the enemy; but his men were, for the most part, badly armed, some, perhaps, scarcely armed at all, while the Athenian hoplites were all in the very vigour of manhood. Still, if a blow was to be struck at all, it must be struck at once, for the reinforcement of Kleon's army would seriously add to his difficulties. Summoning, therefore, all his men together, Brasidas, if we may believe the report of Thucydides, bade them remember the inherent superiority of Dorians over Ionians, and, having explained to them the simple order of the coming engagement, offered sacrifice before sallying forth against the enemy. This ceremony was seen by the scouts of Kleon, who informed him that the Spartans would soon issue from the gates (p. 155).

Preparations of Brasidas for battle in Amphipolis

The wavering and confusion which followed these tidings in the Athenian ranks greatly elated Brasidas. 'These men,' he cried, 'will never withstand our onset. Look at their quivering spears and nodding heads! Men who are going to

fight never march in such a fashion as this. Open the gates at once that I may rush out on them forthwith.' The sudden onslaught broke, as we have seen, the Athenian ranks; but in pursuit of the Athenian left wing Brasidas fell mortally wounded, probably not long before the career of Kleon was cut short by the Myrkinian peltast. His people bore him from the field without suffering the Athenians to know what had happened. He lived just long enough to learn that the Athenians were defeated; and the romantic career of this thoroughly un-Spartan champion of Sparta was closed with a public funeral in the Agora of Amphipolis, where he yearly received henceforth the honours of a deified hero. The buildings raised by Hagnon, the founder of the colony, were thrown down, and Brasidas was venerated as the Oikistes (p. 59) of the city.

Death of Brasidas

The picture of Brasidas, like that of Kleon, comes to us from the hand of Thucydides; but the two portraits are drawn with very different feelings. It was seemingly impossible for him to think of Kleon without a resentment which biased his judgement, although it could not pervert his honesty; but Brasidas was for him a man of heroic mould, on whose exploits he could dwell with unalloyed satisfaction. In speaking of him, his language becomes almost enthusiastic. The ignorance, stupidity, and blundering of Kleon, his coarse impudence and arrogant bluster, serve as a foil to the brilliant qualities of Brasidas, to his moderation, his affability to the citizens of revolted towns, his reputation for universal excellence, his sagacity and his decisive promptitude.

Estimate of Brasidas by Thucydides

A few months after the death of these two men the first stage of that which Thucydides calls the Peloponnesian war was brought to an end by the pacification which is known as the Peace of Nikias. Its duration had been that of the traditional siege of Troy, and it had assuredly brought unnumbered woes upon the Greeks, while it had not materially benefited any one of them. It had thrown back the civilisation of the world by many generations, and had

The Peace of Nikias

done much to prepare the way for the supremacy of some foreign race. These results none then living foresaw; and Athenians and Spartans were alike satisfied with the agreement which promised to end a miserable struggle between the two imperial cities of the Hellenic world.

Tellis, father of Brasidas

On the Spartan side the treaty was signed by Tellis, the father of Brasidas. The old man could at least feel that whatever had been done for Sparta during the contest now brought to an end or interrupted, had been done by the hands of his son.

DEMOSTHENES

THE career of Brasidas was short, but it was marked by singular success. That of Demosthenes embraced many more years, but it ended in one of the greatest disasters which ever befell any city of the ancient world. The two men were, nevertheless, not unlike each other. Both were pre-eminently generals; but their military genius worked in subordination to the instincts of the statesman. The great purpose of Brasidas was to break down the strength of Athens by depriving her of her subject allies on the Thraceward coasts. The object aimed at by Demosthenes was to cripple Sparta by cutting her off from all communication with the countries north of the Corinthian Gulf, and so to restore to Athens the land empire which she lost by the battle of Koroneia (p. 42). In this enterprise and in the other operations of his life he displayed powers as solid, if not as brilliant, as those of Brasidas; and the disasters which he shared were brought about by the faults and follies of other men, not by his own. But although much might be said in favour of all his schemes, these schemes still lie open to criticism; and probably had he been living when Demosthenes set to work to carry out his plans, the severest critic of them would have been Perikles.

Points of likeness between Demosthenes and Brasidas

In the sixth year of the war (B.C. 426) we find Demosthenes, of whose earlier life we know nothing, in command of thirty triremes which issued from Peiraieus, after the

retreat of the Spartan army under Agis, for the purpose of ravaging the Peloponnesian coasts. Nothing of any importance had been achieved when these ships reached the island of Leukas, and there, joined by the troops of all the Akarnanian towns but one, made a combined attack upon the city. Unable to resist the force brought against them, the Leukadians remained passive within their walls, while the Akarnanians strove to impress on Demosthenes the need of immediately beginning a blockade, which they felt sure would soon bring about the fall of the place. But Demosthenes had formed further and more elaborate designs. The Messenians had pointed out to him the necessity of assailing in their fastnesses the savage tribes of the Etolian caterans, who, as living in scattered hamlets, could be attacked in succession and subdued long before they could combine their forces.

Operations of Demosthenes to the north of the Corinthian Gulf, B.C. 426

So little did Demosthenes dread a conflict with wild mountaineers, some of them so savage as to be eaters of raw flesh, and all of them protected by impregnable fastnesses, that he looked forward not only to an easy conquest, but to making use of the Etolians in further enterprises beyond their borders. Second in ability as a naval commander only to Phormion (p. 111), Demosthenes, in forming these plans, allowed himself to be hurried away into schemes which, so far as we may see, would never have been sanctioned by Perikles. The caution which impelled the great statesman to oppose the expedition of Tolmides to Tanagra (p. 21) would have led him to resist still more strenuously the daring but perilous plan of restoring the supremacy of Athens in Boiotia by an attempt made not from Attica, but from the passes of the Etolian mountains. Yet such was the plan for which Demosthenes, at the request of the Messenians, abandoned the siege of Leukas, and thus gave dire offence to his Akarnanian allies. With their aid, as well as with that of the mountaineers whom he intended to conquer, he would pass through Doris,

Ulterior designs of Demosthenes

and, breaking up the Boiotian confederacy, render Athens as formidable by land as she now was by sea.

But his eyes must in some measure have been opened to the difficulties of his task when, on his reaching Sollion, the Akarnanians flatly refused his request for their help. Still, undeterred by their desertion, he pursued his march towards the rugged sides of Oita; but the mountain tribes were now astir, and even the clans inhabiting the valleys hurried to the aid of their kinsfolk. Even now the Messenians insisted that the enterprise was not merely practicable, but easy; and Demosthenes, advancing a stage further, stormed Aigition. But the harassing attacks of the Etolians compelled them to retreat, and the difficulties of the ground converted the retreat into a rout. The Athenians fell into chasms worn down by winter torrents or were entangled in wild spots from which only an experienced guide could extricate them. Unhappily, their Messenian guide was amongst the slain; and the mountaineers hastened to fire the woods in which these fugitives were caught. A few only struggled back to the Lokrian Oineôn, from which they had set out; and the triremes which had brought them from Leukas departed on their melancholy voyage to Athens. Not daring to face the people, Demosthenes remained in the neighbourhood of Naupaktos.

Complete failure of his plans

The prospect was gloomy. At the invitation of the Etolians the Spartans undertook an expedition, in which they succeeded in taking Molykreion (p. 113), and then turned round upon Naupaktos. Undeterred, however, by his recent misfortunes, Demosthenes went in person to Akarnania, and by persistent intreaty prevailed on the people to come to the aid of the Messenian city. Naupaktos was saved, and the Spartan commander, Eurylochos, fell back on Kalydon, the scene of the mythical boar-hunt of Meleagros, and thence on Pleuron, beneath the heights of Arakynthos. Here he tarried for a while at the wish of the Ambrakiots, who were

Renewed overtures of the Akarnanians to Demosthenes

anxious to recover the Amphilochian town of Argos. On learning that the Ambrakiots had seized Olpai, a fortress about three miles to the north of Argos, the Akarnanians did what they could to prevent Eurylochos from joining them. At the same time they sent urgent messages to Demosthenes —who no longer seemed to them a person to be slighted—and to the leader of the Athenian fleet then cruising off the Peloponnesos.

But although Eurylochos succeeded in effecting a junction with the Ambrakiots at Olpai, he was defeated and slain in a battle fought with the Akarnanians under Demosthenes. Darkness was closing in when the struggle came to an end, and Menedaios, who had now taken the place of Eurylochos, felt that his first duty was to extricate all who had fought on his side from a difficult. if not desperate, entanglement. When, on the following day, he made overtures to Demosthenes for a truce which should give them time for retreat, he was met by a refusal to all appearance peremptory; but he was privately informed that if he and his Peloponnesians chose to withdraw quietly and secretly, the Akarnanian generals would take care that their retreat should be unmolested. These ignominious terms were not refused; and the design of Demosthenes for discrediting them among the allies whom they abandoned, and amongst the Greeks generally, was thoroughly successful. While they were preparing for flight, Demosthenes sent a large body of men to occupy strong positions and to lay ambuscades on the line of march from Ambrakia to Olpai. Knowing nothing of the defeat of Eurylochos, the Ambrakiots were on their way to join their kinsmen and allies; and their destruction would crown the achievements of Demosthenes. As the day wore on, the Peloponnesian troops under Menedaios began to steal away under pretence of gathering firewood. The discovery of their retreat led the Ambrakiots to follow their example; and when the Akarnanians interfered to prevent them, they were informed that no hindrance must be placed in the way

Successful campaign of Demosthenes in Ambrakia

of the Peloponnesians, but that they might deal with others as they would.

Slaughter of Ambrakiots at Idomenê

About twelve miles to the north of Olpai rose two precipitous hills known as Idomenê. The higher of these two summits was occupied by the troops sent by Demosthenes to intercept the Ambrakiots, who, having posted themselves already on the lower hill, yet knew not what had taken place. Demosthenes himself marched during the night towards Idomenê, leading one half of his force up the pass, while the other half worked its way round over the Amphilochian hills. At dawn of day the Ambrakiot sentinels heard themselves hailed in the familiar Dorian dialect by men whom they naturally took to be their friends. These men were Messenians whom Demosthenes had purposely placed in the van, and who now began the work of slaughter on enemies practically unarmed and defenceless. The Ambrakiots were in every way at a disadvantage, and the necessary result followed. Many rushed into the gullies and watercourses and into the ambuscades set there for them. A few stragglers only succeeded in reaching the Ambrakian city. That place lay at the mercy of the enemy; and if the Akarnanians had chosen to attack it, they might have carried it at the first assault. To this step they were vehemently urged by Demosthenes; but they had now gained their immediate end, and, reverting to the old grudge, they refused to follow his counsel.

Results of the campaign for Demosthenes

So ended the most fearful carnage of the war, so far as the war had yet gone. The campaign had done little for Athens, but more for Demosthenes, who, without calling on the state to aid him, had won a victory which assured to him the condonation of his previous mistakes. It had also brought him a wealth of spoil, by which the extent of the slaughter might in some degree be estimated. Thucydides purposely withholds the numbers of the slain for fear that his statements would not be believed; but he tells us that of the spoils one third portion was assigned to the Athenians. What this portion

was he does not say; but if we may suppose that it was at least six times as great as the share reserved to Demosthenes as the general, the share of the Athenian people would consist of the panoplies of not much less than two thousand warriors. On this hypothesis the number of the Ambrakiots killed would be between five and six thousand; nor would this represent the total of the slain. Of the panoplies reserved to the Athenians, those only which were given to Demosthenes reached Athens, and were dedicated in the temples of the city. The ship which was bearing the rest was taken on its homeward voyage.

The following year (B.C. 425) was marked by a still more brilliant achievement on the western coast of the Peloponnesos. The ill success of his Etolian campaign had not damped the courage of Demosthenes or deterred him from forming elaborate schemes for bringing the war to a happy issue. His plan for restoring the supremacy of Athens over Boiotia was suggested by the Messenians of Naupaktos; in his present design he followed the advice of the same counsellors. In this case he was justified in so doing. He knew that they were intimately acquainted with the coast of the country which had once been their own, and along which their privateers exercised their craft; and he knew also that the occupation of a strong post in Spartan territory would give to Athens an advantage far greater than any which she could secure by more distant conquests. In short, his present plan was in thorough agreement with the policy of Perikles, and the high reputation which he had won through his recent victories insured him a favourable hearing when he asked the sanction of the people for employing in any operations along the Peloponnesian coasts the fleet of forty ships which they were sending to Korkyra and Sicily.

Schemes of Demosthenes for operations on the Peloponnesian coasts, B.C. 425

His request was granted; and the fact that he was not one of the strategoi for the year attests the thorough confidence which his countrymen felt in his genius. But the

generals with whom he sailed were less disposed to listen when, on doubling the promontory of Methônê (p. 90), he suggested that Pylos might serve well for the purposes of his scheme. They may have remembered the peril into which Phormion was brought in the Corinthian Gulf because time was wasted in Crete (p. 116); but, although they insisted on sailing onwards, a storm brought them back, and Demosthenes again urged the advantages of occupying a spot not much more than fifty miles from Sparta, well supplied with wood and stone for fortification and surrounded by a practically desert country. Their reply was that many such spots might be found on the Peloponnesian coasts if he chose to waste public money upon them; nor had he any better success with the subordinate officers or with the men, although he insisted on the vast difference which the presence of a harbour and of Messenians speaking the same dialect with the Spartans made in favour of this particular spot.

Occupation of Pylos

But the storm lasted on for days, and the men, wearied with idleness, began of their own accord, by way of passing the time, to fortify the place. They had come unprovided with iron tools for shaping stone, or with vessels for carrying mortar; and they were thus compelled to build their walls after the old Cyclopean fashion. The blocks were laid together, so far as was possible, without mortar, smaller stones being thrust into the interstices; and in parts where cement was indispensable, they carried the mortar on their backs with their hands folded over the burden. They soon began to take a serious interest in the work which they had begun only in sport, and toiled hard to strengthen the comparatively small extent of ground which was not sufficiently fortified by nature, before a Peloponnesian army could be brought up against them. The wall was completed in six days on the land side, and Demosthenes remained with five ships to guard the fort, while the rest went on to Korkyra.

Completion of the fort

The spot thus chosen is described by Thucydides as a

rocky promontory, known also under the name Koryphasion, separated from the island of Sphakteria by a passage wide enough to admit two triremes abreast. This island, fifteen furlongs in length, or in superficial size (for his expression is not decisive on this point), stretched from north-west to south-east, a passage capable of admitting eight or nine war-ships abreast dividing it from the mainland. Within this breakwater lay the spacious harbour of Pylos, in which Demosthenes hoped to raise to a higher point than ever the reputation of the Athenian navy.

Geography of Pylos as given by Thucydides

It certainly cannot be said that this description answers exactly to the conditions of the bay of Navarino at the present day; and if we insist on the difficulties thus raised as conclusive against the identification, we shall be driven to infer that there were two islands and two harbours, of which the northern island and the northern harbour alone were occupied by the Spartans. But on this hypothesis it seems impossible to explain why Thucydides speaks only of one island and one harbour, and why he sends the Athenian fleet to Protê as the nearest place of shelter, when they would at once sail through the northern channel of the southern harbour at less than one-fourth of the distance. On the whole, the balance of likelihood seems to incline towards the identification of the bay of Pylos with that of Navarino; but if this conclusion be accepted, we must regard the measurements given by Thucydides as not merely inaccurate, but glaringly wrong. It is, of course, possible, and even likely, that Thucydides, who probably never saw the place, may not have been accurately informed, and that this is a sufficient explanation of the difficulties in his geography.

Pylos and Navarino

As soon as they heard of this occupation, the Spartans felt the seriousness of the tidings. For them it was a matter of life or death that the Athenians in Pylos should be crushed by a simultaneous attack by land and sea, before Demosthenes could be reinforced. For this purpose a body of heavy-armed Spartans was placed on the islet of Sphak-

teria under the command of Epitadas. Demosthenes on his side had done all that an able and brave leader could do,

Preparations of Demosthenes to meet an attack of the Spartans

Sending urgent messages for reinforcements, he drew up his own five ships on the shore under the walls of the fort, and armed their crews to the best of his power. The greater part of his force he reserved for the defence of the landward wall against attacks from the Spartan infantry, while with a few hoplites and archers he himself went down to the rough and stony beach, where the weakness of his walls seemed likely to provoke the fiercest assaults of the enemy from their ships.

His address to his men

In a few sentences he told his men that in a condition like their own there could be no use in long-sighted calculations, and that their wisest course would be to meet without thinking of them whatever dangers they might have to encounter. At the same time he pointed out to them that, so far as he could see or judge, they had altogether the advantage of their enemies, and that even if they should be compelled to give way there was no reason why retreat should not be followed by victory, if only they took care to fall back in good order.

Decisive victory of the Athenians

The day went precisely as he had anticipated. Brasidas attempted, but attempted to no purpose, to force himself on to the beach and decide the matter by a hand-to-hand combat. Falling back heavily wounded, he lost his shield (p. 161); and evening closed on the strange victory of Athenians on the Peloponnesian coast over Peloponnesians who sought in vain to effect a landing from their own ships on their own shores. Four days later, the Athenian fleet, which had arrived from Zakynthos, advanced in order of battle. Sphakteria was full of Spartan hoplites; the Spartan army held the ground beyond the fortifications of Demosthenes, and their ships lay just within the entrance to the harbour. It was the intention of the generals to force their way within this passage, unless the enemy should come out to meet them in the open sea. With strange infatuation, the Spartans quietly awaited their attack

within the harbour; and the Athenians, sweeping in at both entrances, dashed down upon their ships, disabling many and taking five. The Spartans saw with dismay and grief that their hoplites were now cut off in the island; and, putting forth their utmost strength, they rushed into the water and seized some of their own vessels, which, deserted by their crews, were being towed away empty. After a desperate struggle these empty ships were dragged back to the land, but the others were lost beyond hope of recovery.

Arrival of Kleon with reinforcements

Of the mission of the Spartan envoys to Athens to sue for peace, after these woeful and unlooked-for disasters; of the debates in the Athenian assembly; of the strange incidents which led to the rupture of the truce; of the circumstances which threatened to turn the success of the Athenians into failure or ruin—something has been said already in the lives of Brasidas and of Kleon (pp. 140 *et sqq.*). The leather-seller reached Pylos under a pledge that he would return victorious to Athens within twenty days. He found the Athenians thoroughly tired of being besieged themselves, while they were professedly besieging others. A fire, accidentally kindled by the Athenians, had burnt down most of the wood in Sphakteria, and revealed the fact that the number of Spartan hoplites on the island was much larger than Demosthenes had supposed. Hence, on the arrival of Kleon, there seemed to be the more likelihood that the Spartans on the mainland would listen to the proposal, which was at once made to them, for the surrender of the hoplites, who should be well treated, until terms of peace could be arranged. But the Spartans would not hear of it; and, with the full consent of Kleon, Demosthenes arranged the plan of the attack.

On the evening of the next day the whole Athenian force of heavy-armed men was placed on board the ships, which began what the Spartans in Sphakteria supposed to be the ordinary night-circuit round the island. But, before the day broke, eight hundred hoplites, disembarked on both the landward and seaward sides of the island, hastened to surprise the

outpost of thirty men, who kept guard at its south-eastern end, and who were all slain before they could seize their arms.

Plans of Demosthenes for taking alive the hoplites in Sphakteria

As the day dawned, the crews of all the ships were landed on the island, those only being left in Pylos who were absolutely needed to defend the landward wall against the besieging army. The great aim of Demosthenes was to do his work by means of the light-armed troops. An encounter of Athenian with Spartan hoplites could lead only to terrible slaughter, in which not only would the Athenians probably be the greater sufferers, but a large number of the enemy would be slain whom he was especially anxious to take alive.

This end he hoped to achieve by surrounding them with numbers so manifestly overwhelming as to convince them that their only course was to surrender; nor could it be said that a slur was cast even on Spartan bravery if a force of less than four hundred men with their attendants yielded up their weapons to an army falling not much, if at all, short of ten thousand. This vast force was distributed in parties of two hundred on every eminence and on every spot of ground which offered the least advantage in attack, whether in the front, rear, or flanks of the main body, which, under Epitadas, maintained its ground by the spring in the centre of the island.

Arrangement of the Athenian forces

From the first the Spartans had no chance. The stones and arrows shot from the slings and bows of their enemies told on them at a distance at which their own heavy spears were useless; and, if they made a charge, the force in front fell back, while others advanced to annoy them in the rear. Before them stood motionless the compact mass of the Athenian hoplites; but all attempts to reach them were baffled by showers of weapons from the light-armed troops on either side. All, it is true, who came within their reach were borne down by the strokes of the most redoubtable warriors in the world; and at the outset the light-armed troops of Demosthenes, even at a safe distance, gazed, we are told, with feelings of

Position of the Spartan hoplites

wonder, bordering almost on dismay, upon men whose bravery, strength, and discipline had won for them a terrible reputation.

But the discovery that at a little distance the Spartan hoplites were comparatively powerless so far restored their self-confidence that, rushing simultaneously from every side, they ran with loud cries and shoutings on the devoted band. The dust from the lately burnt wood rising in a dense mass added to the perplexity of men already annoyed with a mode of fighting utterly strange to them. Unable, in the fearful din purposely raised by their assailants, to hear the orders given, they began to fall back slowly to the guard post at the north-western end of the island where the ground is highest; but the very fact of their retreat insured their doom. They had abandoned the only spring of water on the island, and in a few hours, more or less, thirst alone would do all that Demosthenes could desire. But in the meanwhile they were comparatively safe; and the Athenians now as vainly strove to dislodge them from their position as the Spartans had thus far sought in vain to come to close quarters with the Athenian hoplites.

Assaults of the light-armed troops

Demosthenes and Kleon were, however, soon relieved of their perplexity. The leader of the Messenian allies, pledging himself to find a track which should bring them to the rear of the enemy, led his men round from a spot not within sight of the Spartans, and, creeping along wherever the precipitous ground gave a footing, suddenly showed himself above them. The traditional story of Thermopylai (i. 148) seemed to repeat itself in this incident; but Demosthenes was especially anxious that the surprise should not be followed by another slaughter of the Three Hundred. Summarily checking all further attack, he sent a herald to demand their unconditional surrender; and the dropping of their shields as their hands were raised aloft showed that the inevitable terms were accepted. The work of Demosthenes was done. He had secured for Athens the power of putting an end to the war,

Unconditional surrender of the hoplites

if she chose to do so, without loss of dignity and honour; and all that he and Kleon had now to do was to convey to Athens the guarantee of this peace in the persons of the captive Spartan hoplites. The fact that Kleon advanced no claim for re-election as strategos is sufficient evidence that he left to Demosthenes the military merit of this great enterprise.

Operations of Demosthenes in the Megarid, B.C. 424

In the following year (B.C. 424) Demosthenes took part in the scheme which, with the co-operation of the demos, was to bring Megara again into the Athenian alliance. The scheme was foiled by Brasidas (p. 163); and the victory of the oligarchic party ended in the destruction of the Megarian long walls, on which Athenian statesmen had relied as bulwarks for the maintenance of their supremacy against that of Sparta. But Demosthenes, it seems, could not rest without attempting to carry out in the interests of Athens plans which involved the need of putting out the strength of the state either on distant enterprises or on plans which for their success depended on circumstances more favourable than any that were likely to arise.

Plan for a campaign in Boiotia

From his work in the territory of Megara he betook himself to work far more risky in Boiotia. The existence of popular parties in many of the Boiotian cities favourable to Athens led him to hope that he might be able to restore the state of things which had preceded the battle of Koroneia (p. 42); and with the aid of some Theban citizens it was arranged that Demosthenes should sail from Naupaktos to Siphai. By the betrayal of this place the Athenians would obtain a footing in the south. In the north they would have the like advantage by their admission within the walls of Chaironeia, while in the east they would gain a still stronger base of operations by fortifying the ground round Delion.

The success of this plan depended obviously on the simultaneous execution of these several schemes. Any unpunctuality would give the Boiotarchs time to encounter

their enemies in detail; and it was manifest that only the confusion and perplexity caused to the oligarchs by the need of meeting many dangers at once would encourage the demos in the Boiotian cities to declare themselves openly on the side of Athens. Unluckily the Athenian commanders were not punctual. In the Corinthian gulf Demosthenes reached Siphai, only to find that the plot had been betrayed, and that both Siphai and Chaironeia were held by the Boiotians in full force. The failure of Demosthenes, and the consequent inaction of the Athenian partisans in the Boiotian towns should, assuredly, have led the Athenians to question the prudence of risking their whole military force in operations which would certainly be resisted with the undivided strength of the Boiotian confederacy. But not less than twenty-five thousand men set out from Athens to fortify the Temenos of Delion; and the result was a battle which repeated the catastrophe of Koroneia (p. 42). Foiled in his design on Siphai, Demosthenes next made an attempt on the territory of Sikyon, and here also failure awaited him. Before all his ships could reach the land, the Sikyonians had fallen upon the men who were already disembarked, and had either slain them or taken them prisoners. Thus was Demosthenes wasting his powers both as a statesman and as a general, while Brasidas was hurrying through Thessaly in the hope of dealing on Athens a mortal blow in a vital part of her maritime empire.

Failure of the plan and defeat of the Athenians at Delion

The name of Demosthenes is subscribed on the Athenian side to the peace which bears the name of Nikias (p. 178); but with this exception he disappears from history for years. In the meantime, the advantages which the Athenians had gained by his victory at Sphakteria had all been lost or frittered away; and the battle of Mantineia (B.C. 418) had completely restored Sparta to her old position. The adhesion of Argos to the Spartan confederacy was a natural result of this recovered power, and here, as elsewhere, the work was done by the oligarchic

Demosthenes foils the Argive oligarchs, B.C. 418

faction or party in opposition to that of the people. At the same time a summons was sent from Argos to the Athenians, bidding them evacuate their fort in Epidauros forthwith. Left without allies in the Peloponnesos, the Athenians had no alternative; but Demosthenes, whom they charged with this unwelcome task, was bent on foiling the Argive oligarchs. On reaching the fort, he ordered some gymnastic contests to be carried on without its walls. The rest of the garrison marched out to witness them. The Athenians, instructed by their general, remained behind. Demosthenes shut the gates and then handed the place over to the Epidaurians. The intention of the Argive oligarchs manifestly was that the fort should be surrendered to themselves.

Mission of Demosthenes to reinforce Nikias at Syracuse, B.C. 413

Five years more pass away before we find Demosthenes called upon to do his part in diverting the catastrophe which threatened the mighty enterprise of Athens at Syracuse. Gylippos had entered the city almost as a conqueror, and had left it again for the purpose of stirring her allies to greater efforts in her behalf, and of inducing other cities to abandon their neutrality and to join in crushing the invaders. Nikias expressed a wish to resign the command. Unhappily the resignation was not accepted; but he was informed that ample reinforcements should be sent to him. Unhappily, also, time was lost in getting these reinforcements to Sicily. Sixty Athenian triremes and five from Chios sailed from Athens in a state of equipment almost as complete as that of the once splendid ships which were now rotting at Plemmyrion.

His voyage to Sicily and entry into the great harbour

On his way Demosthenes stopped to fortify a post on the Lakonian promontory, opposite to the island of Kythera, by which he hoped to annoy the Spartans not less than they had been annoyed by the asylum which some twelve years before he had opened for the Helots at Pylos. From Kephallenia and Zakynthos he went on to Akarnania, there, for the last time, to gather slingers and javelin men near the scene of the

brilliant campaigns which had marked his earlier career (p. 183). It was here, where every spot reminded him of happier times, that he received the tidings that Nikias had lost Plemmyrion. Before he could reach the scene of action, other disasters had occurred; and the Syracusans were counting on the complete destruction of the fleet and army of Nikias, when seventy-three triremes, bringing with them a force of five thousand hoplites, with a proportionate number of light troops, swept into the great harbour. This was the armament of Demosthenes.

Consternation of the Syracusans

The feeling first excited in the minds of the Syracusans was one of consternation. They knew that the Spartans had resolved to set at naught the treaty which bore the name of Nikias, and that they had not merely invaded Attica, but were establishing a permanent garrison at Dekeleia as a thorn in the side of Athens; and the appearance of this magnificent fleet at Syracuse, in spite of the dangers which threatened the imperial city at home, seemed to carry with it the evidence of power and resources of which the enemies of Athens had no conception.

Need of carrying the Syracusan counter-works

For a moment the relative positions of the antagonists were reversed. The Athenians at once issued from their lines and ravaged the low lands of the Anapos; but Demosthenes saw at a glance that this must go for nothing unless some decisive advantage could be gained which might justify a continuance of the siege. At present the very name of blockade was a misnomer, unless the Athenians were to be regarded as the blockaded party. It was clearly of no use to prolong operations near the sea unless the position of the Syracusans could be turned on the northern side of Epipolai, the tableland rising to the west of the city. A wall of the Syracusans had arrested the fortification of Nikias before it could reach the Great Harbour. If this wall could be taken, there might be some hope of once more effectually investing Syracuse. But it was soon evident that attacks by day had little

chance of success; and, with the consent of his colleagues, Demosthenes resolved on a night assault.

Night march on Epipolai

With the whole disposable force of the camp he set out upon a moonlit night. It was plain to him that everything depended on the work which he now had in hand; and his men, in spite of all the sufferings and disasters which had thus far attended the expedition, were full of hope, and even of confidence. They were now acting under a general whose sagacity in council and energy in the field had won him the highest reputation. They were carrying with them everything which might be reasonably expected to insure a successful surprise. Carpenters and masons were ready with their tools both to destroy the enemy's walls and to construct their own. Archers and other light troops went to support the hoplites in their onslaught, and all carried provisions for five days, during which they trusted to exchange discouragement and depression for an assurance of final triumph. It wanted about two hours of midnight when Demosthenes marched along that portion of the slope of Epipolai which still remained in the possession of the Athenians; and not only did he succeed in making his way under Euryelos, but the Syracusan cross-wall itself was taken before any alarm was given. Some of the garrison were slain, but the greater number fled in haste and roused the picked body of men known as the Six Hundred. The Syracusans saw at once the seriousness of the danger; but even Gylippos, with all the forces at his command, was at first driven back by the determined energy of the Athenian assault. In fact, the work of Demosthenes was already done if he could only maintain his position; and had he set out two or three hours before dawn instead of two or three hours before midnight he would, in all likelihood, have succeeded in doing so. He had turned the Syracusan lines, and the daylight would now be rather to his advantage than to that of the enemy.

But he was himself anxious to push the Syracusans as far back as possible, and success had excited in his army a

confidence which with Greek troops generally led to neglect of discipline. The Athenians in front were already in some disorder, when they were thrown into confusion by the sudden charge of some heavy Boiotian hoplites, who had been recently brought to Sicily. From this moment the battle became a wild jumble, in which all authority was lost. The light of the moon, which was shining brightly, revealed the general features of the scene, but left it difficult or impossible to distinguish at a distance one body of men from another; and the Athenians, as they were driven back, became separated from the columns which were pressing forward in full confidence that they were still victorious. As the disorder increased, the Athenians were no longer able to see in what direction their movements should be made, and in the uproar the words of command could not be distinguished. In this fearful din they began to regard as enemies every body of men which was seen advancing towards them, and, as these bodies were now frequently their own fugitives, the horrors of conflict with their own people were added to the fierce onsets of the Syracusans, while the watchword, repeatedly asked for and given, became known to the enemy. The discovery was fatal. Small parties of Syracusans, if brought into collision with a larger Athenian force, would now escape as being able to give the password, while Athenians, in the like case, were at once slaughtered. The presence of Dorians in the Athenian army completed the catastrophe. The war-cry of the Korkyraians and other Dorian allies could not be distinguished from the Syracusan pæan; and the Athenians, dismayed already, were hopelessly bewildered by the horrible suspicion that the enemy was in their rear, was among them, was everywhere. Attacking all who raised the Dorian cry, they not unfrequently fell on their friends; nor were they easily convinced of their mistake. The defeat had in fact become utter rout. The one thing for which the Athenians now strove was to reach their lines on the plain of the Anapos; but the slopes which led to them were bounded by precipices, over which vast numbers

Its success is followed by ruinous defeat

were pushed by their pursuers, and either grievously maimed or killed. The loss to the Athenians was fearful; but the number of the shields which fell into the hands of the enemy was greater even than that of the slain. Many who reached the camp had been compelled to throw down their arms before venturing on the terrible leap over the crags of Epipolai.

Fatal retreat from Syracuse

The well-laid enterprise of Demosthenes had thus failed more disastrously than his attempted march to Boiotia across the Etolian mountains thirteen years before; and to him it was now plain that, do what they would, the siege must be given up or end in their destruction. Syracuse was wild with excitement, while marsh-fever, always most malignant in the autumn, was wasting the Athenian troops. In circumstances such as these, Demosthenes was not a man likely to hesitate. He owed a duty not to himself only, but to Athens; and he discharged it with a manly frankness sullied by no selfish feelings. His proposals for retreat, while retreat was still possible and even easy, were rejected by Nikias; and when at length the order for abandoning the camp was given, it was given after appalling disasters which were to be followed by horrors still more fearful. The fleet had been destroyed in the great harbour; and no way of escape remained except by land. In the retreat Demosthenes led the second division.

Surrender of Demosthenes with his division of the army

Six days after their departure from the great harbour they were still but a few miles from Syracuse. They had crossed the fords of the Kakyparis, and were pressing on towards the Erineos. Demosthenes was never to reach it. We might suppose that his hitherto indomitable energy had been gradually impaired by constant and fruitless opposition to Nikias; but it must not be forgotten that, marching in the rear, he had to think more of keeping his men in order of battle than of getting over ground. Thus constrained to mass his troops, he was exposed to the danger of being surrounded, and in fact he found himself hemmed in between walls in an olive-garden, with

a roadway on either side. His men could here be shot down by an enemy who needed not to expose himself to any danger. So the work of slaughter went on; but as the day drew towards its close, Gylippos made proclamation that the islanders who chose to desert the Athenians might do so without prejudice to their freedom. Few accepted the invitation; but later on in the evening the Syracusans invited the surrender of Demosthenes and his troops under the covenant that none should be put to death either by violence or by bonds or by lack of the necessaries of life. The summons was obeyed, and the troops of Demosthenes were led away to Syracuse.

Unless the terms of this convention were to be kept, Demosthenes could expect no mercy. Next to Perikles and to Phormion there was no leader to whom Athens in this great struggle owed so much, and none therefore whom the Spartans and their allies regarded with a deeper hatred. In flagrant violation of a distinct compact, the doom of the victor of Sphakteria was sealed, and he died, as he had lived, without a stain on his military reputation, the victim of the superstition and the respectability of his colleague. His death is recorded without a word of comment by Thucydides.

Murder of Demosthenes

NIKIAS

THE islet of Minoa, now long since joined to the mainland, was used by the Megarians as a post to defend their neighbouring harbour of Nisaia (p. 20). A narrow passage between two moles jutting out into the sea, and armed each with a tower at the end, was the only channel for ships. These towers were destroyed by battering machines placed on the Athenian triremes; and thus the Athenians were enabled to advance their blockading force from the Salaminian Boudoron almost to the entrance of the Megarian port.

Capture of Minoa by the Athenians under Nikias, B.C. 427

This was the first military operation undertaken by the Athenians in the fifth year of the great struggle with Sparta. The general in command of the successful force was Nikias, the son of Nikeratos, a man of exalted lineage and of great wealth. These circumstances naturally made him acceptable to, and attracted him towards, the oligarchic party; and his natural disposition, singularly cautious, reticent, and meditative, completed the harmony. The difficulties which recommended an enterprise to Demosthenes deprived it of all charms in the eyes of Nikias; and he was as lacking in the restless energy and the tried skill of this great commander as in the sound judgement and far-seeing calculations of Themistokles. He is said to have filled the office of Strategos during the life of Perikles; but it is only in the narrative of the capture of Minoa that he is introduced to us by Thucydides.

Lineage of Nikias

Liberal in the use of his wealth, he was never unpopular. Comic poets laughed at his eccentricities or jeered at the punctiliousness of the ceremonialism which he regarded as religion. Filled with a sense of responsibility to powers unseen, he never stinted either wealth or time in scrupulous attention to their service. Shrinking with a nervous horror from the informers commonly known as sycophants, he did not hesitate to divert their attacks by bribery; but he spent his money with greater readiness and satisfaction in the Liturgy, or public service, in which the Choregos provided the costs of the chorus in the great Dionysiac festival. In such missions as those of the Theoroi sent from Athens for the solemn procession in Delos he was thoroughly at home. In discharge of this duty he is said to have carried with him a bridge by means of which the chorus might pass from the island of Rheneia to that of Delos without being huddled up amongst the crowd which filled the common landing-place. The multitude were delighted to see the stately march of the chorus across a bridge covered with gleaming tapestries; and they were perhaps even more gratified when Nikias bestowed upon the Delians a piece of land which he had purchased for ten thousand drachmas, and the profits of which they were to devote to feasts and sacrifices, under the one condition that in every one of these observances they should invoke a blessing on the founder. He was, in short, in the popular language of the day, a highly virtuous and godfearing man; and his careful devotion showed itself in the introduction of a soothsayer as an inmate of his house, whose business it was to put before him the will of the gods both as to the business and interests of the state and also as to his own private concerns.

His character

A man of this temper is not likely to obtrude himself on public notice; but Nikias, although he was well content to remain personally in the background, was not insensible to the benefits which may be attained by the sedulous eulogies of a few devoted friends. Such a knot of adherents took care to impress on the people

His personal followers

that the man of whom they saw so little was so given up to their service that he deprived himself of all enjoyment and even of sleep and seriously risked his health in order to promote their welfare.

Influence of Nikias with the people

It is well, perhaps, to note these details, minute and trifling though some of them may seem to be, in the picture of a man who was to influence the history of Athens quite as much as it had been influenced by Themistokles or by Perikles, with unhappily this difference, that his influence was exercised to her dire misery and humiliation, if not to her irretrievable ruin. The taking of Minoa marked a change in the character of his own life. From this time he becomes one of the most prominent actors on the stage of Athenian politics. Utterly lacking military genius, possessed of little power as an orator, caring more for the policy of his party than for the wider interests of his country, this strictly conservative statesman gained and kept an ascendency at Athens which might almost be compared with that of Perikles. With both it rested in some part on the same foundation. In all that related to money, Nikias, like Perikles, was incorruptible; and this fact alone, joined with careful decency of life, secured for him an influence with the people which from every other point of view was wholly undeserved, and which put it in his power ultimately to do to Athens mischief more than counterbalancing any good which had been effected by Perikles.

Wealth and occupation of Nikias

He had in truth much to recommend him to the affections of his countrymen. The munificence with which he exceeded the obligations of law or custom in his public services answered a double purpose. It soothed a sensitive conscience as a religious offering to the gods, and it won for him a general respect which the purity of his life heightened into admiration. Belonging to a family as illustrious as any in Athens, he was free not only from the insolence of such men as Kleon, but from the cold and stately haughtiness of Perikles. Generous in the gifts which increased his popularity, he was careful in husbanding and

extending the resources which enabled him to make them. He gained a large revenue from letting out slaves to work in the silver mines of Laureion (p. 101). In no way tainted with the philosophical tastes of Perikles, he spent his leisure time in listening to the discourse of prophets and astrologers, while both his temper and the need of attending to his property made him either unambitious of public offices or even averse to filling them. Here, again, a carefulness which took the form of modesty increased the eagerness of the people to place him in positions which he wished rather to avoid, and to comply even with unreasonable demands which he made in the hope of avoiding them.

Expedition to Melos and Thera, B.C. 426

In the year which followed the capture of Minoa, Nikias was sent out in command of a fleet of sixty ships to bring the island of Melos into the Athenian confederacy. The people of this island and of Thera, the two southernmost of the great central group of Egean islands, claimed to be Spartan colonies, and, as such, had steadily refused to join an Ionian league. They had, however, taken no part in the war, nor would their subjugation have paid the cost of the enterprise. But the attempt was unsuccessful; and, after some unimportant operations along the Lokrian coast, Nikias returned home.

Failure of Nikias in his duty to the Spartan envoys, B.C. 425

His next appearance on the political scene was less creditable to himself and to his party. As a moderate and sober-minded citizen (and such he is styled by Thucydides) he was bound to see that the Spartan envoys who came to Athens, suing for peace after the occupation of Pylos (pp. 137, 186), had fair play. But, as we have seen, Nikias had not a word to say in favour of the ambassadors or of their perfectly legitimate proposals, when Kleon brought about their most unjust dismissal. He acted in a way still more discreditable when, after the rupture of the truce, Demosthenes found himself in difficulties and sent to ask for aid. Kleon rightly insisted that the aid should be sent forthwith, and Nikias abruptly answered that, if he so thought, he had better himself

take the reinforcements to Pylos. In other words, he shirked his own responsibility as a general; and with astonishing meanness, if not with deliberate treachery, he called the Athenians to witness that he solemnly gave up his place to Kleon.

Nikias resigns his command in favour of Kleon

It is not easy to speak in fitting terms of the conduct of a man who, regarding the matter as a joke and a fair trap for catching a political opponent, could calmly propose to endanger the existence of his country by dispatching on what he pronounced an impossible errand a man whom he believed to be, and who professed himself to be, incompetent for common military work. Either Athens was able to extricate Demosthenes from his difficulties or she was not. If Nikias believed that she was not, his duty was to state the fact; if he believed that the task was within her powers, he acted the part of a traitor in recommending as a substitute for himself a man who, as he thought, would depart only to his ruin. Kleon, however, was compelled to go, and thus ended a scene infinitely disgraceful to Nikias and his partisans.

Operations on the coast of the Saronic gulf, B.C. 424

In the following year Nikias achieved respectable success in his operations on the coast of the Saronic gulf. Landing without opposition, he made an effort to seize the hill on which stood the unfortified village of Solygeia, distant about six miles from Corinth. The battle which followed was one at close quarters throughout; but the issue of the contest was at length determined by the Athenian cavalry. The Corinthians, however, still retained possession of the summit of Solygeia, and the approach of reinforcements convinced Nikias of the prudence of retreat to the islets lying off the coast. Subsequently he occupied the peninsula between Epidauros and Troizen, and, building a wall across the isthmus, made it a permanent post from which raids might be made on the coast lands of the neighbourhood.

Whether as a general or as a statesmen, Nikias was wholly unfitted to cope with a man like Brasidas; but

he had an accidental advantage over Brasidas, while that fiery leader was working for Perdikkas against his will in the wilderness of Lynkos (p. 166). During his detention there, Nikias, with Nikostratos as his colleague, sailed from Potidaia against the Mendaians, who, with their allies from Skiônê, had taken up their position under the Spartan Polydamidas on a strong hill without the city. In his efforts to dislodge them from this post Nikias was disabled by a wound, and Nikostratos, attempting to carry the hill from another side, so far lost his presence of mind as to endanger his whole army. The result, as we have seen, was the recovery of Mendê to the Athenian confederacy (p. 176); and Potidaia also was successfully held against Brasidas.

Nikias in the Thraceward command, B.C. 423

In the following year Kleon was sent to command in the Thraceward region; but we are driven to the conclusion that he went only because Nikias would not go, and there is but too much reason for thinking that Nikias and his adherents deliberately thrust Kleon into an office in which they hoped and believed that he would not fail to ruin himself, the ruin of Athens being a matter not falling within the scope of their consideration. Throughout the whole controversy the attitude of Nikias ominously forebodes the crimes of which oligarchical selfishness was soon to yield at Athens an abundant and fatal harvest.

Conduct of Nikias in reference to the appointment of Kleon, B.C. 422

The death of Brasidas and Kleon in the battle before Amphipolis left the way clear for those statesmen at Athens and Sparta who regarded both with suspicion and dislike. Nikias now urged, without contradiction, that Sparta was to be trusted; and at Sparta the peace party had a strongly interested advocate in the king, Pleistoanax, who, being found guilty of personal corruption, had spent twenty years in exile. Returning to Sparta, Pleistoanax found his opponents still ready to lay to his charge every reverse that befell the Spartan forces; and he therefore resolved to do all that he could to end a war in

Peace party at Athens and at Sparta

which he was made a scapegoat for the offences or blunders of other men. Peace would leave no room for military failures, and the return of the Sphakterian prisoners would be the removal of a thorn from his side.

Still, it was only after some little difficulty that the contending parties agreed each to give up whatever they had acquired during the war. This arrangement might have been proposed by Nikias, by whose name this peace is generally known; it is at least thoroughly in accordance with the policy which had prompted his opposition to Kleon. But it was now found that Sparta was more ready to promise than able to perform her promises. Some of the more important stipulations of the peace remained a dead letter; and the dread that Athens might form an alliance with Argos led the Spartans to propose a separate treaty, pledging Athens and Sparta to defend each the other's territories against all invaders, and placing the Athenians especially under an engagement to put down all risings of the Helots. The Athenian garrison, pending the restoration of Amphipolis, still occupied Pylos in conjunction with their Messenian allies; and the special check on Sparta involved in this occupation was thus signed away, for the Messenians must now be restrained from spreading disaffection among their kindred Helots.

The Peace of Nikias, B.C. 421

This alone would have been a concession altogether beyond the value of the practically worthless alliance which in mere fear of Argos Sparta offered to Athens; but so great was the worth of this alliance in the eyes of Nikias and his followers, that by a tacit agreement Sparta received as her reward the prize which she coveted above all others. The Sphakterian prisoners were given up; and in this barren exchange of the hoplites for the alliance Athens received the first-fruits of the philo-Lakonian policy of her oligarchic citizens. But Kleon was no longer living to maintain a policy not wholly lacking the spirit and foresight of Perikles; and the lamp-maker Hyperbolos can scarcely be said to have taken his

Surrender of the Sphakterian prisoners to Sparta

place. Athens was now practically ruled by those who prided themselves on being nobly born and nobly bred; and these statesmen, who could trace their generations back to the ancestral god, set to work to strip Athens of one advantage after another, offering her in their stead apples of the Dead Sea.

So went on the contest, in which Athens found herself always on the losing side. Amphipolis was not given up to her. Intriguers were busy in bringing about an alliance between Sparta and Argos, and a separate alliance was actually formed between Sparta and the Boiotians, B.C. 420. The restoration of the fortress of Panakton at the foot of Kithairon was one of the specifications in the peace of Nikias. The Boiotians, resolved that no Athenian force should occupy the border stronghold, levelled its walls with the ground. But with wonderful effrontery the Spartans declared that the site of the destroyed fort of Panakton was a fitting equivalent for the surrender of Pylos, and that no harm whatever was meant by the private agreement of Sparta with the Boiotians.

Anti-Athenian intrigues, B.C. 420

Envoys were sent from Sparta with full powers for the settlement of any differences on these or any other subjects. But they were again foiled, and the man who did this unworthy work this time was Alkibiades. The ambassadors were dismissed with contempt; but when the assembly met again Nikias insisted that important interests were not to be thus hastily and rashly thrown aside, and that if alliance with Sparta was to the interest of Athens, it was their duty, whatever they might think of the envoys, to send commissioners to Sparta to ascertain their real intentions.

Dismissal of the Spartan envoys from Athens

One of these commissioners, as we might expect, was Nikias himself. They were charged to demand the restoration not of the site, but of the fort, of Panakton, and the rescinding of the private alliance of the Spartans with the Boiotians, unless the latter should accept the peace; and finally, to warn them that an alliance between

Ineffectual mission of Nikias to Sparta

Athens and Argos would be the consequence of their refusal. Nikias found that his words made little impression. The answer was that, although they could not give up their compact with the Boiotians, they were ready to renew the oaths of their covenant with the Athenians. This, Nikias knew, was a superfluous and useless ceremony; and he returned home, well aware of the blame which would attach to himself for the arrangement of a treaty thus steadily disregarded by one of the two contracting parties. So great was the irritation against him that Alkibiades found no difficulty in effecting a defensive alliance with Argos, Mantineia, and Elis.

Battle of Mantineia, B.C. 418

Sparta had, nevertheless, gained a solid advantage, and the battle of Mantineia (B.C. 418) restored to her all her ancient weight in the affairs of the Peloponnesos. She still retained her hold on Amphipolis, while she professed her inability to wrest it from the hands of those who held it. But Athens had no Brasidas to undertake the task of deliverance; and the feebleness of her policy is shown by the course adopted (B.C. 417) towards the Makedonian Perdikkas. Their long experience of his lying and treachery had not convinced them of the folly of trusting to him for the furtherance of any scheme whatever, or of forming any plans with reference to his help.

Attempt to recover Amphipolis with the aid of Perdikkas, B.C. 417

Yet it seems that Nikias and his adherents, who now saw that Amphipolis, if it was to be recovered at all, must be recovered by force, urged an expedition for this purpose. The enterprise was, nevertheless, to be made dependent on the co-operation of a chief whose only gift to Athens had, in the words of Aristophanes, been confined to shiploads of lies. Perdikkas, of course, failed to keep his engagements, and the enterprise was abandoned.

Nikias and Alkibiades now stood in the position of antagonists. Both in spirit were oligarchs; but Alkibiades was as vehemently impetuous as Nikias was cautious; and both found themselves confronted by the lampmaker Hyperbolos.

The situation may have been such as to point to an application of the old remedy of ostracism (i. 68); but ostracism was intended to banish only men whose preponderance in Athens might involve a distinct danger to the state, and Hyperbolos assuredly was not such a man. In all the instances in which it had been thus far applied (i. 118, 179; ii. 21, 44), it had been applied not merely with a fair show of reason, but on grounds decently if not fully satisfactory. Still, at all times it was an instrument which might be abused, and which, if applied when there was no need of it, would certainly be brought into discredit.

Antagonism of Nikias and Alkibiades, B.C. 416

From Thucydides we learn only this fact, that Hyperbolos was ostracised. By Plutarch we are told that the challenge came from Nikias and his adherents to Alkibiades and his followers, but that before the time of voting came, these two parties had changed their plans and formed their combination to bring about the banishment of the lampmaker, who is said to have taken the place of Kleon. The combination was, of course, successful, and Hyperbolos went into exile at Samos. The historian adds that he was a pestilent man, exiled not on account of any fears of his political genius or influence, but simply because his rudeness and violence reflected disgrace upon the city. Thucydides was well aware that ostracism was never devised to be a punishment for such men, and in all likelihood he meant his statement to be taken as an expression of this conviction. The matter was regarded in the same light by the people; and ostracism was never again resorted to against an Athenian citizen.

Ostracism of Hyperbolos

Before another twelvemonth had passed, Athens had committed herself to the great enterprise which was to insure her preponderance throughout the whole Hellenic world, by the conquest of the great Dorian colonies in Sicily. The mere thought of any such enterprise marks a complete departure from the statesmanship of Perikles. It substituted the process of gambling for that of a steady growth, and gave room for the play of the most

Scheme for an expedition to Sicily

sordid motives, and the most disingenuous and underhand policy. There was trickery on every side. By trickery Alkibiades had carried his point against the Spartan envoys; by trickery the Athenian envoys were deluded into notions of boundless wealth possessed by the cities of Sicily. The sight of sixty talents of uncoined silver as a month's pay in advance for a fleet of sixty vessels was for the Athenians a conclusive reason for sending, under the command of Nikias, Alkibiades, and Lamachos, an expedition charged with maintaining the cause of Egesta against the men of Selinous, and with the general furtherance of Athenian interests in Sicily, B.C. 415.

Efforts of Nikias to quash the scheme, B.C. 415

Before the assembly met to discuss the details of the expedition Nikias had done, we cannot doubt, all that he could to knock the whole scheme on the head. His appointment to the command, we are expressly told, was made against his will; and the statement implies that he had made no secret of his opinion. He is represented as expressing his assurance that in the matter of their wealth and their power of bearing the costs of the war the Egestaians had simply lied. Born though he was to high station and vast riches, the life of Nikias was not particularly fortunate; but of all his misfortunes none was greater than his strange inability to discern the road which almost at any given time would have led him out of his difficulties. If, in his reply to the harangues of Alkibiades, Nikias merely repeated what he had already said about the supposed resources of the Egestaians, it is even more astonishing that he should not insist on being sent himself to test the truth of their words than that he should allow himself to be appointed general against his will, to carry out a scheme based avowedly on reports which he knew, or vehemently suspected, to be false. It was also his misfortune that his habitual hesitation, caution, or timidity (whatever be the name which should be given to it) deprived his words of all force in cases where reserve or prudence became the highest wisdom.

The expedition to Sicily was not much more to his mind than the enterprise of Demosthenes at Pylos. In the former case he pronounced success to be difficult; in the latter he had asserted it to be impossible. Had he chosen, when replying to the sarcasm of Kleon, to adopt the line which he took in opposition to Alkibiades in reference to the Sicilian expedition, he might himself have achieved, with the aid of Demosthenes, a victory far more brilliant than that of Demosthenes and Kleon in the island of Sphakteria. But Nikias opposed himself to resolute action under all circumstances; and his words failed to carry due weight when, as in the present instance, they were really born out by facts. Most of all, it was his misfortune, if not his fault, that he had never put before himself a definite policy founded on the real interests of his country, so far as these could be known to him, whether by his own experience or through that of previous generations. Of such an effort he was, perhaps, constitutionally incapable. It may, probably, never have struck him that when he preferred negotiations with Sparta to a vigorous effort to cut short the career of Brasidas in Thrace, or rather prevent his entering upon it, and again when he threw cold water on Kleon's vehement rhetoric and his 'mad promise' about Sphakteria, he was going in the teeth of the whole policy of Perikles.

His dislike of resolute action

Had he been able to realise the distinction, he might have told his countrymen that, although in discouraging the enterprise of Demosthenes he was recommending a course which would not have had the sanction of the greatest of Athenian statesmen, yet, in setting his face against any further interference in Sicilian affairs, he would have had his unqualified approval. But, with the death of Perikles, his very name seems almost to have passed away; nor is anything in the history of the Peloponnesian war more astonishing than the rapidity with which one system of foreign policy seems to follow another without any apparent consciousness of change on the part of the people.

Changes in the foreign policy of Athens

But, if ever an opportunity was needed by a weaker leader for strengthening himself under the authority of a more distinguished name, we might have supposed that this need would be felt by Nikias at a time when, above all others, his advice caught both the form and the spirit of that of Perikles. When he inveighed against the folly of plunging into a distant war, he was only inforcing a warning which the Athenians had received from Perikles years before. Yet, although he puts forth his counsel as his own, his judgement loses nothing of its value. He was assuredly right in asserting that Athens owed no duties to barbarian inhabitants of a distant island, while she owed the strongest duties to her own citizens and to the members of the great confederacy; that the Spartans were only nominally at peace with her, and that her first disaster would be to them a welcome opportunity for giving vent to a wrath long pent-up; that their example would be followed by other States which had repudiated the peace or contented themselves with a ten days' truce periodically renewed; and that if Athens was bent on righting wrongs, her business was to redress her own. The Thraceward Chalkidians were still in revolt; and until these were again brought under obedience it was madness to divert fleets and armies to aid the Egestaians. In short, there was absolutely no reason for going, and every reason for refusing to go. The plea of the Egestaians that Syracuse was seeking to make herself mistress of all Sicily was one to which it was absurd to listen. The success of Syracuse in any such scheme would be to the interest of Athens, not to her injury. In their present state of isolation the several Dorian cities of that island might be tempted to take part with the Dorian states to which they traced their origin; but if Syracuse became an imperial power she would be less likely to risk her empire in a contest with a city whose strength was equal to her own.

Soundness of the advice given by Nikias

A far more serious danger, he asserted, threatened Athens from the selfish ambition of citizens who far outran their

fortunes in the extravagant luxury of their private lives, and in the splendour of the chariots and horses with which they competed for the prizes in the great Hellenic festivals. If such men urged on the expedition, they had the twofold motive of wishing to increase their own importance and making good the ruinous costs of their lavish and iniquitous display, and on this account they were utterly unfitted to be trusted with any command in such an enterprise. Expressing frankly the dread with which he saw this knot of disaffected citizens grouped together in the assembly, he besought the elder men to discharge their duty to their country by putting an effectual check on their destructive folly, and, lastly, intreated the president (Prytanis) to put the whole question once more to the vote, under the full assurance that the irregularity of the step would at least be condoned.

Warnings of Nikias against the party of Alkibiades

This speech of Nikias roused the fiercest indignation in Alkibiades, at whom the latter part was especially pointed. His reply, full of misrepresentations and of downright falsehoods, was followed by addresses from other orators, and by renewed intreaties from the Egestaian envoys; and the effect of all was so powerful that Nikias, feeling himself already practically defeated, resorted to a device by which he hoped to disgust them with the enterprise. Assuming that the expedition would be voted, he insisted that it must be made on a scale which should insure success. In the way of help in Sicily itself not much was to be looked for; and in the reported wealth of the Egestaians he put no faith whatever. Their enemies, the men of Selinous, he knew to be far richer; and on their side were ranged seven important and wealthy cities, strong especially in their cavalry. Against such foes, mere fleets, with their ordinary crews, would be of little use, or none. They must carry with them hoplites, bowmen, and slingers, and must go amply provided with a convoy of grain-bearing vessels and with everything that could insure the well-being of an army under all possible

Nikias insists on a vast enlargement in the scale of the enterprise

accidents of war. These were for him no matters for doubt or controversy; and, if any viewed them as such, he would resign to them a command which had been thrust upon him against his will.

This manœuvre on the part of Nikias was followed by a result precisely opposite to that which he had hoped for. Far from inducing the people to give up the enterprise as one beyond their strength, he united all parties by proposing a course which seemed to make failure impossible. The enthusiasm of those who were most eager for the expedition was increased tenfold, while the more sober-minded were led to think that what Athens undertook with a superfluity of resources she would assuredly be able to accomplish. When, then, one of the citizens started up and insisted that, instead of further preface, Nikias, without multiplying words, should say precisely what he wanted, the unfortunate general was caught in his own trap. Like one passing sentence of death not on himself (for his personal bravery was never questioned, nor can he be charged with setting too high a value on his own life), but on the high-spirited, though mistaken, men whom he feared that he should be leading to ruin, Nikias said that he must have at least a hundred triremes, and, if possible, more than five thousand hoplites, with light troops in proportion. Not only was his demand instantly complied with, but, with his colleagues, he received full powers over all arrangements for the expedition.

His proposals are accepted

The die was cast. The efforts of Nikias to chill the ardour of the people had secured to Alkibiades a victory more decided than any which he had hoped for, and staked almost the existence of the state on the issue of the enterprise. But in justice to Nikias it must be remembered that his dissuasions were not founded on mere anticipations of disaster. He went with no high hopes; he was weighed down with some heavy misgivings; but unquestionably he had not made up his mind that the scheme must end in failure. We can scarcely doubt that, had he felt thus

Probable explanation of his conduct

assured, he would have refused to serve as general, as he had declined to take charge of the reinforcements for Pylos. Nikias went to Sicily, because on a general view of the case he felt that he might hope to return home in triumph; but he condemned the whole scheme emphatically on the ground that in such an enterprise victory would be not much less a calamity than defeat. The latter might cripple Athens for years; but success would extend her empire to an unmanageable size, would involve her in a network of difficulties, and would lead to further schemes of aggression which would be avenged in her speedy downfall.

Departure of the fleet from Peiraieus

The magnificent fleet prepared for this momentous enterprise left the Peiraieus about midsummer. At Korkyra it was divided into three portions, one being intrusted to each of the three commanders. These divisions followed at fixed intervals the three ships which had been sent to ascertain the intentions of the Italian and Sicilian cities. The bright hopes with which they started were damped almost at the outset. Vigorous preparations were being made everywhere to resist the invasion, and the pretended wealth of Egesta was a mere cheat. To Nikias this was no disappointment, and his mind was soon made up. He had been sent to bring to an end the quarrel between Egesta and Selinous, and to see whether anything more might be done to promote the interests of Athens generally.

Proposals of the three generals

He proposed to act according to the letter of these instructions, and, having displayed the power of Athens before the cities on the coasts of Sicily, to return home unless any fresh events should open a way for further operations. For Alkibiades this counsel was intolerably timid and tame. His advice was that they should send envoys to all the Sikeliot cities in the hope of detaching them from Syracuse, and to the Sikel tribes in the hope of securing their alliance for Athens, and that this should be followed up by an attack on Selinous and Syracuse, if this step should then be found necessary. With a sharpness and precision equal to that of Nikias, Lamachos urged

the view of the mere general as distinguished from the statesman. Not a moment, in his opinion, was to be lost, while the impression made on the minds of the Sicilians by the sudden arrival of the Athenian fleet was still fresh. Either complete victory or an important success would follow an immediate attack on Syracuse, while a decided advantage gained over the Syracusans would be followed by a proportionate depression of the adverse Sikeliotes, who would thus in their own interests be tempted to make their peace with Athens or even to become her active allies.

Of these three plans that of Nikias was the best from the statesman's point of view. From that of the general the counsel of Lamachos was both bold and able: that of Alkibiades was unworthy either of the soldier or of the statesman. Looking to the political interests of Athens we can scarcely imagine a more prudent and business-like course than that recommended by Nikias; and the result would have been a return home, if not after brilliant success, yet without disgrace, and without that exasperation of feeling both in central and Sporadic (i. 72) Hellas which would have followed the triumphant execution of the plan of Lamachos. Unhappily the adhesion of the latter made it necessary to adopt the plan of Alkibiades. A brave and gifted military leader, Lamachos was a poor man, to whom neither birth nor culture gave an adventitious importance; and when he found himself in a minority he naturally felt, as a soldier, that it was better to run the chance of victory with Alkibiades than at once to abandon it with Nikias.

Adoption of the plan of Alkibiades

But Alkibiades was soon summoned to stand his trial at Athens on the charges brought against him before he sailed for Sicily; and his departure left to Nikias and Lamachos the joint command of the whole expedition. If the latter still insisted on immediate and decisive operations against Syracuse, he probably hesitated to place himself in open antagonism with a colleague whose influence with the army far exceeded his own.

Recall of Alkibiades

As the summer ended, the bright hopes with which they left the Peiraieus still remained merely dreams for the future. But to the Syracusans the indecision of the Athenians and their ill-success in gaining allies in Sicily changed the first feeling of awe and depression into one of contempt; and Syracusan horsemen, riding up to their lines, asked if they were come as new colonists. This insult suggested to Nikias a plan for effecting a landing near Syracuse without the risk of a battle. A man of Katanê, on whom he could depend, lured away to that town the whole cavalry and infantry of Syracuse, under the assurance that the Katanaians would aid them in destroying the Athenian fleet and army together. They reached Katanê only to find a deserted camp, and, before they could return, Nikias had sailed round the island of Ortygia into the great harbour, and landed his troops at leisure on its western shore, near the inlet known as the Bay of Daskon.

Landing of the Athenians at Syracuse

Hurrying back, the Syracusans offered the Athenians battle. For that day it was declined. On the next morning Nikias drew up his men for the contest. The short address which he made to them before the engagement contains, if it may be accepted as historical, a humiliating confession of the evil effects produced by his own hesitating strategy; and the Syracusans are now represented as needing a severe lesson from enemies whom they despise, while the Athenians are spurred on only by the sense, not of their own intrinsic superiority, but of the difficulties of their position, which courage alone would enable them to surmount. His previous indecision had led the Syracusans to suppose that they might choose their own time for the attack; but he had no sooner ended his speech than he ordered a rapid charge, and the hoplites were upon them almost before they could seize their arms. In spite of this surprise, the action was obstinate; but the result seemed to the Athenians to justify them in erecting a trophy. They had so far succeeded that the Olympieion, in which a large treasure was stored, lay at their mercy; but Nikias made no attempt to

Indecisive victory of the Athenians

take it. A thorough defeat might have led him to give up the enterprise, to the immense benefit of Athens. His slight success furnished him with a reason for spending the winter in comparative idleness, and for sending to Athens for troops and munitions of war, with which, if his former speeches are to be taken as in any measure historical, it was disgraceful not to have been fully provided from the first.

Prospects of the Athenians

Even now the prospect before them was singularly favourable. Between the great harbour and the bay of Thapsos lay the inner city on Ortygia, joined by a bridge to the mainland, and the outer city on Achradina to the north, each with its own encircling walls. Between the two the little harbour afforded an unwalled landing-place; and there was no reason why the Athenians should not at once draw their besieging lines far within the circuit of the wall which, during the winter now beginning, the Syracusans threw up from the shore of the Great Port to the eastern extremity of the ground afterwards occupied by the suburb of Tychê. But now, as before, the golden hours were wasted. The fleet sailed away to Katanê, and thence to Messênê, in the hope that that town would be betrayed to them. For thirteen days they lingered in vain hope before the place, and then withdrew to winter quarters at Naxos.

Efforts to obtain the alliance of Kamarina

The most important incident of this winter was the attempt made to induce Kamarina to join the Athenian alliance. The Athenian and Syracusan envoys were introduced together to their assembly; and, on the part of the Athenians, Euphemos explained that they had come to Sicily to prevent the Dorians of that island from interfering actively on behalf of the Dorians of Peloponnesos. His speech, as it is reported by Thucydides, can scarcely be read without a feeling that the portion of it which relates to the growth of the Athenian empire might be translated into language thoroughly harmonising with our own notions of national unity and freedom. The Athenian empire was a standing protest against the suicidal policy of

isolation on which Sparta, for her own selfish purposes, found it convenient to act; and the Athenians, whether consciously or unconsciously, felt that the Hellenic theory of autonomy tended first to keep up a dead level of insignificance, and then to leave the feeble units thus produced at the mercy of one great military state. Euphemos would have been speaking the truth if he had said that Athens had been striving to weld the Ionic tribes into a nation; but the Greek language had no word to express the idea, nor could he have dared so far to wound the strongest instincts of the Hellenic, and more especially of the Dorian, mind. He might have appealed further to the history of Athens and of Sparta, and challenged the hearers to adduce instances, on the part of Athens, of that violent interference with the constitutions of allied cities which characterised the conduct of Sparta.

Resolution of the Kamarinaians to remain neutral

But the fact still remained that the Athenians had no reason to fear aggression even from Syracuse; and that therefore the motives alleged by Euphemos for their presence in Sicily were not those which had really brought them. He could not confess that the expedition was from first to last opposed to the principles which had guided the most illustrious Athenian statesmen, and he could not therefore remove the suspicions with which the Kamarinaians, in spite of their friendly leanings and their habitual distrust of the Syracusans, still regarded the undertaking. Both the envoys were therefore dismissed with courtesy, and Kamarina remained professedly neutral, when the prompt action recommended by Lamachos might have secured her hearty alliance for Athens.

Mischievous inaction of Nikias

In fact, during this winter, the plan of action, so far as it deserves the name, was that of Nikias; and, throughout, it showed his incompetence as a general not less than his previous career had shown his incompetence as a statesman. Only in the matter of this expedition had he sought to enforce on the people the policy of Perikles; and it is hard to deny that this was an accidental

result of the timidity—not personal, but political—which led him to set his face against all energetic enterprise. He had thrown cold water on the enthusiasm of his countrymen when Perikles would have striven to kindle it into a strong flame; and now, when Alkibiades proposed the Sicilian enterprise, he suddenly fell back on the far-sighted policy of that illustrious man. This fact alone should have sufficed to show that for any work which he disapproved Nikias was the most useless of leaders, and might be the most mischievous.

Hard fate of Athens

The fate of Athens at this time was hard indeed. Her aggressive instincts led her to put faith in the most profligate and lawless of men; the reverence which she paid to incorruptibility seduced her into the even more fatal error of trusting great things to a citizen whose only merit was his respectability. She had still generals who were fairly worthy of being compared with Perikles and Phormion. Of these she sent out one, Lamachos, in subordinate command with Nikias and Alkibiades; the other, Demosthenes, was despatched with fresh troops and money, when Nikias had used to little purpose or to none the vast resources which he had declared adequate to the task. There can be no doubt that had these officers been sent out at the first, Syracuse would have fallen in the first summer; nay, the conquest of all Sicily would in all likelihood have been achieved while Nikias was frittering away time in seeking to patch up alliances with Sikel tribes, and in humiliating petitions for aid addressed to Tyrrhenian cities or to the Phenicians of Carthage. He was also, it is true, collecting horses, together with bricks, iron, and other siege instruments; but it is quite possible that these might not have been needed by a more energetic general, and we look with amazement on the determined sluggishness which insists on remaining idle in the luxurious temperature of a Sicilian winter when Brasidas could work hard through the frosts and icy winds of the Thraceward Chalkidikê.

Meanwhile Alkibiades, who, instead of going to Athens,

had made his escape at Thourioi, was satiating his revenge for his alleged wrongs by deliberate and systematic treachery.

Mission of Gylippos to Sicily, B.C. 414

It was at his suggestion that the Spartans occupied Dekeleia, and at his suggestion that Gylippos was sent to take the command at Syracuse. This general was the son of Kleandridas, who had been condemned to death thirty years before as a sharer in the corruption of Pleistoanax. He had probably fled with his father to Thourioi, and his sojourn in Italy had given him a knowledge of the country which probably recommended him for this mission. The choice was justified by the event.

While the enemies of Athens were thus stirred to more vigorous action in the Peloponnesos, the trireme despatched by Nikias for more troops and more money reached Athens. Both were granted without a word expressing the disappointment which the Athenians must have felt; and the strength of the state was more dangerously committed to an expedition which it would have been altogether better if they had from the outset starved. Unhappily for Athens, the hopes of Nikias were raised by the capture of the tableland of Epipolai to the west of the city. From this tableland the inner and the outer city were seen stretched out on the level ground at the foot of the long and gentle slope which began from Euryelos. The occupation of this slope by the Athenians was to give them the command of all the ground as far as the Syracusan wall, the capture of which would enable them to blockade the outer and the inner city separately both by land and sea. Of this tableland and this slope the Athenians obtained possession, at the moment when a picked force of six hundred Syracusan hoplites was setting out to execute the same task. The Athenians on the next day advanced to the Syracusan wall and offered battle, which the Syracusans declined.

Occupation of the tableland of Epipolai by the Athenians

Their next step was to build a fort at Labdalon. This was followed by the erection of another work with a rapidity which astonished and alarmed their enemies. Hard by the spot known as the Sychê the Athenian generals ordered the

construction of a fortified inclosure, which might serve as a stronghold for the army and as a centre and starting-point for the blockading walls which were to run thence eastward to Trogilos and westward to the great harbour. So marvellous was the speed with which this fortification was raised that the Syracusans advanced for the purpose of summarily arresting the work. But they were beaten by the Athenian horsemen, who had now been provided with Sicilian horses, and Nikias might profess to see in this victory the earnest of still greater results to be achieved by a force the lack of which he had pleaded as his excuse for his long inaction. It is strange, however, that we do not hear of any Athenian cavalry again until they are mentioned as undergoing a defeat in the engagement which preceded the final conflict in the great harbour.

Athenian siege works

The Syracusans now erected a wall reaching to the cliffs of Epipolai and cutting the extended line of the Athenian wall; but Nikias was successful in destroying this wall also. He now fortified the cliffs of Epipolai; and the Athenians thus started, with an immense advantage, in their task of carrying their southward wall to the great harbour. But, while this work was going on, the Syracusans were busy preparing a fresh stockade, defended by a deep trench, from the new wall of the city across the low and marshy ground which stretched to the banks of the Anapos; and, by the time that the walls on the cliffs were finished, the Athenians found themselves opposed by a fresh obstacle in their progress to the sea. Lamachos determined to make himself master of this counter-work at once. The fleet was ordered to sail round from Thapsos into the great harbour, and an attack on the trench and stockade at daybreak was rewarded by the capture of almost the whole of it. The rest of it was not taken till later on in the day.

Syracusan counter-works

The real purpose of Lamachos was now accomplished. The Syracusans had not only been driven from their counter-work, but had been defeated in open battle. Their left wing

was in retreat for the river; but a picked body of three hundred Athenian hoplites, hurrying in pursuit of them, now brought about a great disaster. Attacked by a body of Syracusan horse, they were thrown back on the Athenian right wing in such disorder as to disturb the ranks with which they were brought into contact. Lamachos saw the danger, and hurried to their aid from the left wing with the Argive allies and a small force of archers. In his haste he advanced with a few companions, and, crossing a trench, was for a moment separated from his followers. In an instant he was struck down and killed.

Death of Lamachos

Seeing the confusion thus caused among the enemy, those of the Syracusans who had fled into the city issued again from the walls, and a detachment was sent to take the great central fortification, from which the Athenian siege walls had started. They had hoped to find it empty, and they succeeded in taking the redoubt raised for the protection of the builders. But, when they advanced beyond it, they found themselves suddenly facing a wall of flame. Nikias was lying sick within the fort, and, on learning that the enemy was approaching, he ordered his attendants to set on fire all the woodwork within their reach. The assailants at once retreated; the day had, indeed, turned against them. The Athenian army, startled by the outburst of flame, was hurrying up from the lower ground, and, at the same moment, the magnificent Athenian fleet was seen sweeping round into the great harbour which it was destined never to leave.

Entry of the Athenian fleet into the great harbour

Once more Nikias had everything in his favour. Some weeks were yet to pass before Gylippos could attempt to enter Syracuse; and the one thing of vital moment was that the city should be completely invested before any such attempt could be made. A single wall carried from the great harbour to the central fort, and thence to the sea at the northern extremity of Achradina, would have well sufficed for this purpose. But, instead of ordering this work to be done and urging it on with the ut-

Favourable condition of the Athenians

most speed, Nikias wasted time in building the outward wall double from the first, while much of the ground, which should have been guarded by the eastward wall, was left open. Even the measure of success thus far achieved was enough to lull Nikias into a feeling of fatal security; and the temptation to abandon himself to an inactivity which a painful internal disease made doubly desirable was at this time for other reasons yet stronger. From the first a party in Syracuse had been at work to make him master of the city, and by these men he was now told that the utter dejection of the Syracusans foreboded their immediate surrender. The new prospect of this unconditional submission probably made him turn a deaf ear to the proposals which were actually made to him for a settlement of the quarrel.

It was at this time that he received from Thourioi tidings which should at least have made him more watchful. A Spartan general, they said, was making his way to Sicily more in the guise of a pirate or a privateer than as the leader of a force which should command respect. The contempt implied in the phrase soothed the vanity of Nikias, who showed his sense of his own superiority by failing to send, until it was too late, even a single ship to watch the movements of this enemy and to prevent his landing in Sicily. But even when Gylippos had landed at Rhegion and was fairly on his march to Syracuse, Nikias still remained as unconcerned within his lines as though the approach of a general bringing with him the influence of the Spartan name were a thing wholly beneath his notice. He had only to block even now the roads by which he had himself seized Epipolai, and Gylippos must have fallen back to devise some other means for succouring Syracuse.

Failure of Nikias to hinder the entry of Gylippos into Syracuse

The time demanded, indeed, all the energy and caution of which an Athenian army was capable. An assembly had already been summoned in Syracuse to discuss definitely the terms for a pacification, when they learnt that the aid of which they had despaired was almost at their

doors. All thoughts of submission were at once cast to the winds, and they made ready instead to march out with all their forces to bring Gylippos into the town. Nikias was doing all that he could to make his way smooth before him. The materials for the new wall to the north-east of the central fort were lying for the most part ready for the builders; but the workmen were busy on the few furlongs which still remained unfinished at the end of the southern wall, where for the present there was no danger whatever, and Gylippos entered Syracuse almost as a conqueror.

Extreme depression of the Syracusans

Nikias was at once made to feel that the parts of the actors had been changed. The Spartan general offered a truce for five days if the Athenians would spend the time in leaving not merely Syracuse, but Sicily. The terms were treated with silent contempt; but the very fact of their being offered was not less significant than the refusal of Nikias to accept battle when Gylippos led the Syracusans into the open space before his lines. The next day was marked by the loss of the fort of Labdalon, which seemed to have gone from the mind of Nikias because it was out of his sight, and by the seizure of an Athenian trireme in the harbour. Event followed event with wonderful speed, and every incident tended to show that the whole work spent on the blockading walls would be merely labour lost. It now seemed to him plain that the contest must be decided in the great harbour, and Nikias resolved while there was yet time to fortify the promontory of Plemmyrion, which, with Ortygia, from which it is one mile distant, formed the entrance to the port.

Change produced by the entry of Gylippos into Syracuse

The place offered some decided advantages. Convoys could enter the harbour without risk, and the Athenian fleet could intercept any vessels seeking entrance on the enemy's side; but, as a set-off to these benefits, it had no water, and the Syracusan horsemen harassed or destroyed the foraging parties, which were compelled to seek supplies from long distances. On land Nikias

Occupation of Plemmyrion by the Athenians

underwent fresh reverses. He fought a battle to hinder the progress of the Syracusan counter-work, which had all but reached his wall; but his army was driven back to their lines, and in the night the point of intersection was passed. All hope of blockading Syracuse except by storming the counter-wall thus finally faded away. But he still had it in his power to guard the entrances to the slopes of Epipolai, and thus to keep the ground open for the work which the new force to be presently summoned from Athens must inevitably have to do. Nikias again let the opportunity slip, while his idleness added to the colossal burden under which even the genius of Demosthenes broke down.

Meanwhile Gylippos was traversing Sicily to obtain help for Syracuse, and a messenger was bearing to Athens a letter in which Nikias proposed to give an exact report of all that had thus far befallen the fleet and army. It is certainly a wonderful specimen of the ingenuity with which a religious man may deceive himself about the motives and consequences of his own actions. Strict truth would have constrained him to confess that the first three months of his time in Sicily had been wasted; that the winter which followed had been thrown away in thinking about a work which, if begun at the first, would probably by that time have been brought to a successful issue; that by his inaction he had allowed the Syracusans to build a new city wall, thus rendering necessary an enormous extension of his besieging lines; that he had wholly failed to turn to account the success achieved by Lamachos in the destruction of the second Syracusan counter-work; that he had not stirred hand or foot to prevent Gylippos from entering Syracuse with a formidable reinforcement; that he had got together the body of cavalry which he considered indispensable to the success of the siege, and that, except on the first occasion on which they were employed, this cavalry had done nothing at all; that he had allowed a Corinthian fleet to sail into Syracuse; and that, when he had brought with him a fleet of unparalleled efficiency,

Letter of Nikias to the Athenians

he had dispirited the crews partly with inactivity and partly by employing them on fruitless and trivial errands, and that the ships themselves, from being constantly in the water, were fast becoming unseaworthy. This last fact was most important. The ancient triremes were built mostly of unseasoned timber, owing to the ease with which such timber might be bent into the desired shape. Hence it became necessary frequently to haul up the ships, which began to rot by constant immersion in the water.

Ungenerous complaints of Nikias

But, whatever allowances we may be disposed to make for a man in a position calling for the exercise of faculties of which he was destitute, it is still plain that in the only two passages in his letter in which he blames anyone he blames not himself, but the men under his command and the Athenians who had sent him as their commander. He can complain of the difficulty of managing his seamen, forgetting the zeal with which they had carried on the work of the siege under the brave and soldier-like Lamachos. He can apologise for uttering unpleasant truths in the ears of a people who cannot endure to have their bright hopes crossed, and who impute to their servants the blame of results brought about by circumstances beyond their control. The charge was in his case wholly inapplicable. It would have been well had the Athenians long since put him aside as a worthless general, and had they insisted long ago on some small performance in place of vague and delusive promises. To their misfortune they believed him when he extended the scale of the armament intended for Sicily; to their utter discomfiture they believed him now, and took his letter as a picture not of things as Nikias saw them, but of things as they were in themselves. He told them in substance that at first they had been uniformly victorious, and that they had finished their besieging walls when Gylippos came with a Peloponnesian and Sicilian reinforcement; but he never told them that common care would have rendered his entrance into Syracuse impossible. He told them that his first victory over Gylippos

had been followed by a defeat caused by the Syracusan archers; but he added not a word to explain the absence of cavalry and bowmen on his own side. He told them of the Syracusan counter-walls which had crossed his own, forgetting that he was thus contradicting his previous assertion that his own wall had been finished. He told them that not merely the splendid appearance but the usefulness of their ships was wretchedly impaired, forgetting that, only through his own resistance to the counsels of Lamachos, they had failed to do and to finish their work long ago. He told them that the change in their fortunes had been followed by discontent and some insubordination among the troops, and desertion among the allies; but he did not say whether to this or to what cause they were to ascribe the disappearance or inaction or carelessness of his cavalry. He told them that either the present army must be withdrawn, or another of equal strength sent to reinforce it, adding that he wished to be relieved from his command, for which he was now incapacitated by illness. He had always been incapacitated for it; but, although for his unconsciousness of this fact he should not be too severely judged, yet it would be hard to count up the many benefits which, as he said, the Athenians had derived from his generalship. In their infatuation they thought that they would derive more still.

Reply of the Athenian people

Whether, when this ominous letter was read in the assembly, there were any who had the wisdom to see and the courage to denounce the monstrous misconduct of the expedition from the very first, the historian has not told us. The resignation of Nikias was not received; but two of his officers, Menandros and Euthydemos, were appointed his colleagues, until the new generals, Demosthenes and Eurymedon, should arrive with reinforcements.

While Athens was thus making ready more victims for the slaughter, Gylippos was urging the Syracusans boldly to attack the Athenians on the element which they regarded as their own. With his usual promptness, he arranged that

thirty-five ships should issue from the harbour at the moment when forty-five from the dock in the lesser harbour should double the islet of Ortygia, the one to attack the Athenian fleet in the harbour, the other to assail their naval station of Plemmyrion, and thus to cover the attack on the forts which was to be made simultaneously by his own land forces. It was a fight to determine which side should command the entrance to the harbour; and with common care the Athenians might have retained it, to the great discomfiture of their enemies.

Attack on the Athenian fleet by Gylippos

At first the day went against them, until the Syracusan fleet, becoming disordered from their own success, furnished them with an opportunity for the employment of a tactic in which they were unrivalled. With the loss of three triremes they sunk eleven ships of the enemy; but a victory which might otherwise have at least insured the ultimate safety of the besiegers was rendered worthless by the loss of Plemmyrion.

Victory of the Athenians

With an imprudence against which it was the business of Nikias to guard, the garrison of the three forts on the cape went down to witness the sea-fight from the shore, where they could do no good, leaving only a few to keep watch at their post. On these Gylippos fell with overpowering force. After a short and sharp conflict the first fort was in his hands. With the other two forts he had even less difficulty; but when these had been taken the fortune of the day had been changed on the sea. It mattered little. The Athenian garrison escaped; but Gylippos was master not only of the entrance to the harbour, but of the Athenian forts and of the vast quantities of corn and money, some belonging to the military chest, some to private merchants, which had been placed there for safety. With these they lost three triremes which had been drawn up for repairs, and the sails and tackle of not less than forty ships. Worse than this, they saw two of their forts permanently occupied by their enemies, while the Syracusan fleet kept guard off Plemmyrion. Henceforth no convoy could reach

It is neutralised by the loss of Plemmyrion

them without a fight, and they were made to feel on how slender a thread the very existence of the whole armament was hanging.

Blow after blow now fell upon the besieging force. Their treasure-ships were intercepted by Syracusan cruisers off the coast of Italy. Timber prepared for shipbuilding was burnt by the Syracusans. Time, money, and labour were spent to no purpose in the useless effort to pull up or to saw off the stakes which the Syracusans had planted in the water in front of their old docks; but while they were thus occupied, the Syracusans were maturing their larger schemes for the destruction of the Athenian fleet before any reinforcements could reach them. It would have been better for Athens if this scheme had been successful, for the ruin of the navy of Nikias would have furnished to Demosthenes a sufficient justification for taking off the army and forthwith returning home.

Multiplication of disasters for the Athenians

Meanwhile that indefatigable general was approaching with his new force; and the fortune of this force was in great measure determined by a disaster which now befell some reinforcements of Syracusan allies. These were marching across the territory of Sikel tribes, whose chiefs had been warned by Nikias to do what they could to cut short their journey. Had he taken this step when he heard that Gylippos was marching from Himera, the issue of the siege might have been different. As it was, eight hundred of these allies were slain by Sikels who lay in ambush for them, together with all the envoys but one; but this one, the representative of Corinth, led the remaining fifteen hundred to Syracuse. The delay thus caused served only to involve the second Athenian army in the ruin which might otherwise have been confined to the first.

Destruction of Syracusan allies by Sikel tribes

But it was not merely by additions to their numbers that the Syracusans were gaining strength. They were acquiring that power of making the best of circumstances which had marked the Athenians in their most vigorous days. They

knew that the Athenian trireme, made not to crush its enemy by sheer weight, but to sink it by dealing a fatal wound in some weak part near the water-line, needed ample sea-room, and in a confined space was practically worthless; and the Athenian fleet being cooped up at one end of the great harbour, they had no need to fear the manœuvres which had rendered the very name of Phormion terrible. The bulk and awkwardness of the Syracusan ships might tell in their favour so long as the Athenians were debarred from using their peculiar tactics; and they so armed the prows of their triremes and reduced their projection as to render them in fact fatal to the lighter ships which had won for Athens her command of the sea.

Strengthening of the Syracusan triremes

The Syracusans counted therefore on certain victory if an attack were made simultaneously both by sea and land. They were mistaken. The operations of the first two days were indecisive. On the third day the Corinthian Ariston suggested that the Syracusans should take their midday meal on shore, and then immediately renew the fight. The Athenians, seeing them land, thought that their work for that day was done. Most of them were still fasting when the Syracusan fleet was seen again advancing in order of battle. The Athenian ships were manned in some confusion, but even thus neither side had any decisive advantage, until the Athenians, wearied out with hunger, determined to bring the matter to an issue, and advanced rapidly against the enemy. The result instantly verified the calculations of the Syracusans. The slender prows of the Athenian triremes were crushed by the heavily weighted bows of the enemy's ships. Seven triremes were sunk; many more were disabled; and the Syracusans were counting on the destruction of the whole fleet at the very moment when the armament of Demosthenes entered the great harbour (p. 195).

Defeat of the Athenian fleet at the moment when Demosthenes enters the great harbour

The change for the better produced by his coming was but as a momentary flash of light breaking through storm-clouds. The terrible disaster on the slopes of Epipolai

(p. 196) convinced Demosthenes of the imperious necessity for immediate retreat, and he urged this upon Nikias as an instant duty. The reply of Nikias betrays an imbecility, an infatuation, or a depravity which has seldom been equalled; and we have to remember that it is given to us by a historian who reviews his career with singular indulgence, and who cherished his memory with affectionate but melancholy veneration. He deprecated the carrying of an open vote for retreat, which might become known to the enemy; and on a point like this he must have known that he had no opposition to fear from Demosthenes. But it is scarcely possible that he could believe himself to be telling the truth when he spoke of the circumstances of the Syracusans as being even more desperate than their own. However much the Syracusans may have spent on this struggle, he must have seen that while the strength of the Athenians was daily becoming less, that of his enemies was enormously increasing. If the report of Thucydides may be trusted, the truth is that his resolution was taken on other considerations. The Athenians, he asserted, were a people under the dominion of loud-voiced and bullying demagogues; and of the men who were now crying out under the hardships of the siege, the greater number would join eagerly in charging their generals with treachery or corruption if ever they should again take their seats in the Athenian assembly. He would never consent to a retreat until he received positive orders from Athens commanding his return; death at the hands of the enemy would in every way be preferable.

Nikias opposes the request of Demosthenes for immediate retreat

In plain English, Nikias was afraid to go home, and he was a coward where Demosthenes, in spite of his failure, was honest, straightforward, and brave. Nay, more, he was ungenerous as well as cowardly. He had no right whatever to slander his soldiers, who had patiently submitted to his mischievous inaction and had done their duty admirably under Lamachos. Least of all was he justified in ascribing an exacting severity to a people

Grounds of his opposition

whose crying sin it had been to place unbounded confidence in himself on the ground solely of his strict respectability. Demosthenes, nevertheless, insisted that the siege should be given up, but that, if on this point they must wait for a dispatch from Athens, they would be grossly disregarding their duty to their country if they failed to remove the fleet at once to Katanê or to Naxos, where it would be quite as much a check on the operations of the Syracusans, while they would be able to command supplies from all parts of Sicily. Above all, there was time yet to carry out the change. Soon it might be too late.

Even to this wise counsel Nikias opposed a front so firm as to lead his colleague to think that he had some private grounds for his resolution which time in the end would justify. He had none; and when Gylippos returned to Syracuse with reinforcements, Nikias at once saw the absurdity of representing the resources of the Syracusans as failing, and only requested that the order for retreat should be privately circulated, not formally decreed in a council of war. This his colleagues would regard probably as a matter of great indifference, well knowing that the secret decision or the open proclamation would soon be known to the Syracusan leaders.

Nikias consents to retreat

But although Nikias thus wasted days and weeks of precious time, the mischief done to Athens was not yet irreparable. In numbers her fleet was still superior to that of the Syracusans; and the Athenian army was still capable of holding its ground against an attacking force while they either embarked on board their ships or effected their retreat by land. The consent of Nikias had come to Demosthenes as a reprieve for which he had almost ceased to hope, and the preparations for departure were well advanced when an eclipse of the moon (p. 90) filled Nikias with an agony of religious terror.

Eclipse of the moon

The fears of the Athenians generally were probably not much less than his own. But we have no reason for thinking that they were bent on any one method of appeasing the divine

wrath of which the eclipse was regarded as the sign; and we cannot doubt that Demosthenes, had he been in the place of Nikias, would have devised some interpretation of the portent which would soothe the prejudices or superstitions of his countrymen without interfering with the plans necessary to insure their safety. But to the grovelling devotee one course only was open. The prophets must be consulted, and their decision obeyed. Unhappily his own prophet Stilbides had recently died; and, according to Thucydides, the soothsayers, whose opinion was taken, declared that the Athenians must remain where they were until thrice nine days (a lunar month) should have passed away. Nikias accordingly insisted that during this period the question of retreat should not even be mooted. Diodoros, indeed, says that the prophets required no more than the usual delay of three days; and Plutarch also affirms that in insisting on a delay of twenty-seven days he went far beyond the demands of the soothsayers. If this be true, the folly of Nikias assumes a blacker character; but we may safely follow Thucydides, and acquit him of this monstrous and criminal extravagance.

Nikias insists on a delay of twenty-seven days

There were not wanting later interpreters who maintained that Nikias was led astray by the blundering of his professional soothsayers, who put upon the portent the very reverse of its real meaning, inasmuch as, for persons wishing to fly from an enemy or to do anything in secret, an eclipse was of all signs the most encouraging. But all history goes to show that even the most superstitious interpret according to their present temper and circumstances tokens which they hold to be supernatural. While the Athenians were in the first flush of hope after their arrival in Sicily, they were quite willing to ascribe to purely natural causes a thunderstorm which struck terror into the Syracusans; and the records of every people afford instances of encouragement derived from signs which might seem to portend disaster. From the fall which cost him a tooth Hippias drew the conclusion that no other part of him would

Interpretation of signs and portents

receive burial on Attic soil (i. 56); an accident of much the same character was interpreted by William the Conqueror as a sure presage that he would become king of England. Nikias was now less hopeful than even Hippias, and his terrors were in proportion more abject. It was nothing less than the duty of an Athenian general to be ready with favourable interpretations of all signs to which the popular temper would allow favourable interpretations to be given.

By this mad decision Nikias sealed the doom of the army and of the fleet; and long before the seven-and-twenty days were ended, this once magnificent armament had been utterly destroyed. Twice, if not thrice, he had deliberately thrown away opportunities which, if properly used, might have led to victory; and now, when men abler and more honourable than himself were anxious at this eleventh hour to snatch the victims from the sacrifice, this miserable man, if we may believe Plutarch, calmly put aside his duty as a general and sought refuge and comfort in the round of religious ceremonies which were to avert the anger of heaven and the consequences of his own misdoings.

Infatuation of Nikias

Through Syracuse the tidings flew like fire that the Athenians had resolved to sail away, and that their resolution had been changed by the eclipse. The former decision was a virtual confession both of defeat and helplessness; the second gave the Syracusans ample time to prepare the net for seizing the prey. When, at length, they were ready, seventy-six triremes issued from the city; and, hastening to meet them with eighty-six ships, the Athenians learnt that, even with superior numbers, their science and skill were of no avail under the circumstances in which Nikias had placed them. Forgetting for a while that he was not in the open sea, Eurymedon, with a division of eighteen ships, made an effort to outflank the enemy. The movement, isolating him from the rest of the fleet, brought him dangerously near to the shore, and the Syracusans, bearing down upon him, drove him back to the land. All his ships were taken, and Eurymedon himself was slain.

Defeat of the Athenians in the harbour

While things were going thus on the sea, the Syracusans, under Gylippos, received on land a check from the Tyrrhenian allies of the Athenians, and the arrival of a larger Athenian force compelled them to retreat with some little loss. The rules of Greek warfare constrained the Athenians to treat this check as a victory; but they probably felt that the setting up of their trophy was but as the last flash of the sinking sun, which gives a more dismal and ghastly hue to the pitch-black storm-clouds around him. They had hoped that the arrival of Demosthenes, with his seaworthy triremes and their healthy crews, would enable them to make good all their losses; and they now knew that they had undergone a ruinous defeat on the element which they had long regarded as peculiarly their own.

They attain a partial success on land

In the enthusiasm created by their victory, the Syracusans resolved that the whole Athenian armament should be destroyed like vermin in a snare. So clear was the helplessness of the Athenian fleet, while it remained pent up in the petty basin which Nikias had chosen for the great tragedy, that, without the least misgiving, they set to work to convert the basin into a lake. Triremes, trading-ships, and vessels of all kinds were anchored lengthwise across the whole mouth of the harbour, from Plemmyrion to Ortygia, and strongly lashed together with ropes and chains. This was all that Nikias had gained by fostering silly scruples for which the men to whom Athens owed her greatness would have felt an infinite contempt. The indignation with which Demosthenes had protested against any delay, after the failure of his great night attack, must have burned still more fiercely when he saw the supreme result of the besotted folly of his colleague. Their very food was running short, for, before the eclipse, a message had been sent to Katanê to announce the immediate return of the fleet, and to countermand all fresh supplies.

The Syracusans block the mouth of the great harbour

But regret and censure were now alike vain. No longer

insisting on the supreme authority with which the Athenians had invested their generals, Nikias summoned a council of war, in which all present admitted the stern necessity of abandoning the whole length of their lines on Epipolai; of retaining just so much of their fortifications as would suffice for the shelter of their sick, and for the protection of their baggage, and of the stores, which were fast dwindling away; and, finally of staking everything on a gigantic effort to break the barrier which now lay between them and safety. If this effort should fail, the ships were to be burnt, and the army was to retreat by land.

Abandonment of the lines on Epipolai

A hundred and ten triremes still remained, some scarcely seaworthy, others still strong and in good trim; and we must not press hardly on Athenian generals who shrank at first from a sacrifice so costly. Yet it can scarcely be doubted that its postponement was an error in judgement, not on the part of Nikias (for he had no judgement to exercise), but on that of the firm and sagacious Demosthenes. Past experience had taught them the bitter lesson that in encountering the solid prows of the enemy's ships in a cramped space they were setting themselves the task of felling a tree with a razor. The barrier which hemmed them in could be broken, they fully knew, only at a tremendous loss, whereas their lines on Epipolai gave them free access to the country beyond and the power of effecting a deliberate and orderly retreat. The loss of ships, a large proportion of which had now only a nominal value, was as nothing to the ruin of an army which could never be replaced.

Resolution to make an attempt to force their way out of the harbour

A few only of the seven-and-twenty days had passed when Nikias told his men that all had been done which could be done to insure success in the struggle which must bring them to their doom if they failed in it. Archers and javelin-men were to aid the hoplites on the decks, and grappling-irons were to fall on the enemy's prows, and to keep the ships locked in a fatal

Address of Nikias to the Athenians before the battle

embrace until the combatants on one side or the other should be swept into the sea. They were, indeed, charged with a task most distasteful to Athenian instincts; but a hard necessity compelled them to make the fight as much as possible a land battle on the water. Nikias reminded the countrymen of Phormion, who had shattered fleets as large again as his own, that they still had many more ships than the Syracusans; he warned them that certain destruction awaited them if they allowed themselves to be put back on the shore lined with the forces of the enemy; and he besought them to show that, in spite of bodily weakness and unparalleled misfortunes, Athenian skill could get the better of brute force, rendered more brutal by success. He sought to stir the enthusiasm of the allies by reminding them of the benefits which they had reaped from association with the imperial city, while to the Athenians he said plainly that they saw before them all the fleet and all the army of Athens. Her docks were empty, her treasury was exhausted, and, if they should fail, her powers of resistance were gone.

A speech more disgraceful to himself and less likely to encourage his men has seldom been uttered by any leader; for Nikias himself was the whole and sole cause of all the shameful facts which he was now compelled to urge as reasons for a last desperate effort. It was his fault that Syracuse had not been taken a year ago; it was his fault that everything went wrong after the death of Lamachos; it was his fault that Gylippos had entered the beleaguered city; it was his fault that they had not retreated when retreat was first urged by Demosthenes; and it was his fault, lastly, that they had not left the harbour before the barrier of ships had made departure almost impossible. Yet this was the man who could beseech his soldiers to remember that on the issue of the coming fight depended the great name of Athens and the freedom which had made her illustrious.

Discouraging tendency of this speech

How far this speech, or the speech of Gylippos, as reported by Thucydides, answered to the words actually

spoken, we cannot say. It is natural that in the pages of the historian the exhortation of the Spartan leader should be in complete contrast with the humiliating confessions of the Athenian general. But Gylippos is further represented as insisting on the more dreadful fate which the Athenians had designed for the Syracusans, a fate involving death or slavery for the men, the most shameful treatment for their wives and children, and the most ignominious stigma for their city. If he so spoke, he knew that he was lying. The conditions of ancient warfare were horrible indeed, and the Athenians were not especially tender in their treatment of the conquered; but they had come to Sicily to extend their maritime empire, and as the occupation of the island was not to be thought of, this object could be attained only by attaching the Sicilian cities to the Athenian confederacy whether as free or as subject allies. In neither case could they afford to indulge in barbarities which might be practised on enemies whom there was no need to conciliate.

Address of Gylippos to the Syracusans

The time for the last great experiment had come, and the men were all on board, when Nikias, in his agony, determined to make one more effort to rouse his men, not to greater courage, for this had never failed, but to greater confidence. Passing in his ship in front of the triremes, he called up the trierarchs of each, and, addressing him not only by his own name, but that of his father and his tribe, he conjured each and all to think of things which must have been only too painfully present to their thoughts, of all their home affections, and of that free and unshackled life which Athens bestowed as the most precious of all gifts upon her children. It mattered not to him, he said, if he repeated himself or dwelt on topics which might be thought weak or stale. They were, in fact, neither weak nor stale; but it may be doubted whether he was acting judiciously in drawing to this extreme tension, at a time when steadiness of eye and hand was most of all needed, the nerves of a people so highly sensitive as the Athenians.

Last exhortations of Nikias to the trierarchs

At length the signal was given, and in a few minutes a combat ensued which is described by Thucydides with details so vivid as to waken the suspicion that we are looking on a picture worked up from materials coming from that great storehouse of mythical narrative which has certainly given shape and colour to his record of the siege of Plataia (pp. 85, 86). With marvellous animation he brings before us the Athenian army advancing to the water's edge and there surveying with alternations of passionate hope and fear the fortunes of a fight on which the lives of all depended. Certainly we can well imagine that neither at Artemision, Salamis, nor Mykalê was seen a sight so fearful as this combat in the quiet waters of the Syracusan bay under the deep blue Sicilian heaven. Unshrouded by the dark pall which falls over modern battles, Athenians and Syracusans might severally be seen, here vanquished, there victorious. So long as the two sides seemed nearly equal only the usual sounds of combat were audible; but the defeat or destruction of a ship called forth from the Athenians, we are told, the loud wail which expresses the grief of southern peoples. Thus in their camp might be seen some who, in the intensity of feverish suspense, were keeping time with their bodies to the swayings of the battle; others who were abandoning themselves to a paroxysm of agony on witnessing some disaster; others carried away by an unreasonable hope on seeing their own men driving back the enemy. At last brute force prevailed. The chains which barred the outlet were too strong to be broken, and the weight of the Syracusan charge became, in the excitement of the moment, irresistible. The whole Athenian fleet was driven ashore, and the crews of the shattered ships were landed amidst the piercing shrieks and bitter weeping of the troops, who hurried down to give such help as they could.

Ruin of the Athenian fleet

The sun sank on a scene of absolute despair in the Athenian encampment, and of fierce and boundless exultation within the Syracusan walls. The first care of the Greek

after a sea-fight was to recover, if he could, the wrecks of his ships, and to demand permission under truce for the burial of the dead. The supreme misery of the hour left no heart for any task except that of preparing for instant flight. Demosthenes, indeed, still wished to make one more effort to break the barrier at the mouth of the harbour. Of the hundred and ten ships which had that day been engaged, about sixty were still fit for use; of the Syracusan fleet of seventy-six ships, more than six-and-twenty had been disabled. The advantage of numbers, therefore, still lay with the Athenians; but the men would not stir, and we can scarcely deny that they were right. Every hour left them weaker for lack of food; every hour added to the strength of the enemy; while the conditions of the struggle would remain unchanged, except in so far as they were changed for the worse. Nikias had assented to the plea of Demosthenes; but when the retreat by land was finally resolved on he was still unwilling to move at once. Had they so moved the whole of this still mighty armament would have been saved.

Nikias still opposes the resolution of his colleagues for instant flight

But Nikias was to be their evil genius to the end. The disasters of the expedition had been caused wholly by his own indecision, and this indecision seems to have been in no small measure fostered by the absurd negotiations which he kept up with a contemptible minority in Syracuse, and which fatally fed his sense of his own sagacity and importance. The false report of some Syracusan horsemen, who professed to be sent by this Athenian party within the city, now led to a resolution which sealed the doom of the army, as that of the fleet had been sealed by the occurrence of the eclipse. These horsemen told them that the roads were already blocked and guarded, and that a careful and deliberate retreat on the following day would be better than a hasty departure during the night. The statement represented, not the fact, but only the wishes of Hermokrates, who, having in vain tried to rouse the Syracusans to instant action, devised this plan for

Stratagem of Hermokrates to delay the retreat

keeping the Athenians within their lines until the net was ready.

Blocking of the roads and passes by the Syracusans

The tidings, we are told, were implicitly believed, and we are led to infer that Demosthenes was as thoroughly tricked as Nikias; but the language of the historian is too concise to warrant our assertion of the fact. Either the inference is unwarranted or the judgement of that able leader was at last overclouded and weakened by the long series of his misfortunes. It is far more likely that Nikias caught eagerly at any excuse which seemed to justify inaction, and Demosthenes may have yielded after a short and less vigorous resistance. Having remained over the first night, Nikias, and perhaps his colleagues also, thought it best to remain another day, and make preparations for a more orderly retreat. But long before the day was done the roads, the fords, and the hill passes were broken up by the Syracusans, or carefully occupied and guarded.

Abandonment of the sick in the Athenian camp

With the morning of the second day after the battle, the retreat, which was to end in ruin, began with unspeakable agony. Forty thousand men were to make their weary and desolate journey, they scarcely knew whither, with a vague notion of reaching the country of some friendly Sikel tribes. Not until now had the history of Hellenic states exhibited such an appalling contrast of overwhelming misery with the lavish splendour and high-wrought hope which had marked their departure from the Peiraieus. Their misery, great as it must in any case have been, was increased by the stern necessity of leaving their sick behind them, and of leaving them, not, as in the less savage warfare of our own times, with confidence that they would be treated with something like mercy and humanity, but to the certainty of slavery, tortures, or death.

In this desperate crisis Nikias did his best to cheer and encourage the men whom his own egregious and obstinate carelessness had brought into their present unparalleled

difficulties. If the substance of his exhortations be rightly given (and in this instance we can have little doubt that it is), his words were singularly characteristic of the man. He told them, indeed, that such precautions as were within the power of the generals for shortening the retreat and insuring the safety of the men had been already taken, and that messages had been sent to summon the Sikel tribes to their aid. But his words were chiefly a comment on the homely saying that the lane must be long which has no turning. If, when they set out on this ill-starred enterprise, they had incurred the wrath of any of the gods, they had surely been amply punished, and they might, therefore, now reasonably hope for gentler treatment at the hands of the offended deity. In any case, the evils which they might still have to suffer must, in some degree, be lightened by the consciousness that they were shared alike by all. Suffering from a painful malady, accustomed during his life to the graceful ease of a high-born and wealthy Athenian, and, more than this, scrupulously exact in his religious worship, and blameless in his private conduct, he had now to bear up under the same trials and privations with themselves. This is not the language of a man who dreads the physical dangers of war; but it is the language of one who, even in the direst extremity, cannot be brought to see and to mourn over the fact that the misery which he is striving to alleviate is the result of his own folly in wasting a series of golden opportunities.

Attempts of Nikias to encourage the troops

In the order of march the division of Nikias led the way. At the end of five days, having had to gain every inch of their way by sheer hard fighting, they found that they had accomplished a distance which, if unhindered, they could have traversed easily in two hours, and this fact convinced the generals that the idea of attempting any further advance towards Katanê must be given up. The plan now was to make for the Helorine road, leading to the southern coast of Sicily. In the dead of

Change in the direction of the retreat

night, under cover of many fires which they had kindled to put the enemy off his guard, they set forth on their southward march. It was safely accomplished, in spite of a panic which separated the division of Nikias from that of Demosthenes. The two leaders had taken counsel together for the last time. In a few hours the troops of Demosthenes were compelled to surrender (p. 198).

Rejection of the proposals of Nikias by the Syracusans

Nikias, five miles further to the south, knowing nothing of the catastrophe which had befallen his colleague, had crossed the Erineos and encamped his men on some sharply rising ground. The incessant toil of a whole week had left this great army still within two or three hours' distance from Syracuse. Early on the following day Syracusan messengers informed him of the surrender of Demosthenes with his whole division, and summoned him to follow the example of his colleague. Incredulous at first, Nikias was convinced when the horsemen whom he received permission to send under truce came back and confirmed the wretched tidings. He lost no time in proposing to Gylippos that in exchange for the men under his command Athens should pay to the Syracusans the whole cost of the war, hostages being given at the rate of one man for each talent until the whole sum should be paid off. Terms more advantageous to Syracuse could not well have been obtained; but they were now filled with the delight of the savage in trampling a fallen enemy under foot, and the proposals of Nikias were rejected.

The catastrophe on the banks of the Assinaros

In the dead of the following night the Athenians took up their arms, hoping that they might be able to cross the next stream before their flight was discovered; but the shout which instantly rose from the Syracusan camp showed the vanity of this hope, and with a feeling of blank dismay they waited for the dawn. In the morning the miserable scenes of the preceding days were repeated for the last time. Not far in front ran the stream of the Assinaros. Fainting with exhaustion, the Athenians dragged themselves on in the hope, partly of

quenching an unbearable thirst, and partly of obtaining on the other side of the river some respite from tortures fast exceeding the powers of human endurance. The sight of the sparkling and transparent stream banished all discipline and caution. Instead of turning round to the enemy, and so covering the passage of those who had to cross first, each man sought only to plunge into the water himself and gain the other side. In an instant all was confusion. The Peloponnesians furiously drove the masses before them upon the crowds struggling in the water, while the Syracusans, from a safe distance on the heights commanding the river, overwhelmed them with storms of missiles.

To put an end to slaughter which had now become mere butchery, Nikias surrendered himself to Gylippos personally, in the hope that the Spartan might remember the many benefits which in times past Sparta had received from him. He submitted himself, he said, to the pleasure, not of the Syracusans, but of the Spartans, and requested only that the massacre of his men should cease. The order was accordingly given to take the rest alive; but the number of prisoners finally got together was not great. By far the larger number were stolen and hidden away by private men, and the state was at once defrauded of wealth which an acceptance of the offers of Nikias would have insured to it. Of the prisoners thus surreptitiously conveyed away not a few made their escape, some almost immediately, others after having spent some time in slavery.

Surrender of Nikias to Gylippos

But this slight alleviation scarcely affects the completeness of the catastrophe. Forty thousand men had left the Athenian lines on the great harbour; a week later seven thousand marched as prisoners into Syracuse. If we assume that twice this number were stolen away into private slavery, nearly half of this great multitude had in seven days perished after the most intense and exquisite suffering alike of body and mind. What became of the sick and wounded who were left in the camp

Extent of Athenian disasters and losses

we are not told; but we can scarcely doubt that all were murdered, and murder was mercy in comparison with the treatment of the seven thousand prisoners who were penned like cattle in the stone quarries of Epipolai.

Death of Nikias

The Athenian generals were spared the sight of these prolonged and excruciating tortures. The Syracusans were determined on the instant death, not of Demosthenes only, whose life they were pledged to spare, but of Nikias. The friends of the latter were now become his fiercest enemies. They were afraid that tortures might compel him to betray their intercourse with him, and they were eager to bury their secret in his grave. The Corinthians too, it is said, were sorely troubled by the fear that his great wealth might regain him his freedom, and that his freedom would be used to involve them again in a struggle like that which had now reached its close. Their fear was absurdly thrown away. Had they voted him a golden crown with a public maintenance for life in their Prytaneion, as the destroyer of Athens and the benefactor and saviour of Syracuse and Sicily, their decree would have been not too severe a satire on his political and military career.

The judgement of Thucydides on Nikias

Of this career the history of this memorable expedition furnishes a picture for which no further touches can be needed. There is something of absurdity, perhaps of presumption, in speaking of retributive sufferings; and any feeling of satisfaction in the fact that this miserable man ended his days in protracted agony is closely akin to the horrible malignity of those who rejoiced in inflicting it. But, contemptible and wrong though such a feeling would be, we shall not easily repress a feeling of natural indignation when we find the historian, who has so truthfully recorded the fatal blunders of Nikias, noticing the death of Demosthenes without a word of comment (p. 199), but adding that Nikias least of all deserved his fate, because he was such an excellent and religious man. The political judgements of Thucydides are unfortunately not always to be trusted. Least of all are they to be trusted in the cases

of Nikias and of Kleon; but it is well that his truthfulness has in each case preserved to us the facts which show how far or why his censures and his praises are undeserved.

The military history of this expedition has a painful and terrible interest of its own. But the Athenians who were led to death or slavery in Sicily were not mere professional soldiers; and the horrors of the catastrophe are heightened by the intense political emotions with which they undertook to fight the battles of their country. Never had they behaved more gallantly, never had they undergone privations so cheerfully, never had they nerved themselves so zealously to renewed efforts after frightful disasters, as in this fatal expedition. Had they left Peiraieus under the command of Lamachos and Demosthenes, they would have returned home in triumph a year before the time when they were brought to utter ruin by the folly and obstinacy of one man.

Conduct of the Athenians serving under Nikias

When the ruin wrought by Nikias was complete, the Athenians seem to have awakened from their dream; and his name was omitted from the pillar which commemorated the other generals who fell in this expedition. Yet his name is one of the most memorable in the history of Athens. With him the Athens of Ephialtes and Perikles passes completely away; and, in place of genuine political growth, we have henceforth the arbitrary and capricious tyranny of oligarchical factions.

Subsequent judgement of the Athenians on Nikias

HERMOKRATES

THE first great step in the downfall of Athens must be ascribed to the well-meaning but hopelessly incompetent Nikias; and it was brought about by the failure of an expedition of which he disapproved, and in which he commanded sorely against his will. But even with the dilatory feebleness of Nikias, this expedition would in all likelihood have been successful, if Syracuse had lacked the guiding hand of Hermokrates.

Position of Hermokrates in Syracuse

As a general, Hermokrates was not particularly successful, either in Sicily or elsewhere. But as a statesman his countrymen fully appreciated his value; and from first to last he showed a remarkable soundness of judgement, and a skill not less remarkable in the adaptation of means to ends. Of his early life we know absolutely nothing; but his alleged claim of descent from the god Hermes may be taken at the least as an indication that he came of an illustrious lineage. That he soon acquired a preponderating influence amongst his fellow-citizens is shown by the part which he played in the Congress at Gela, in the year which witnessed the masterly campaign of Brasidas in Thrace (p. 166 *et seq.*) and the disastrous defeat of the Athenians at Delion (p. 193).

Congress of Gela, B.C. 424

The success of Demosthenes at Sphakteria seems to have convinced him that the Sicilian cities would sooner or later be called upon to acknowledge the supremacy of Athens, and to join her confederation; and with a true instinct he saw that, if Athens was to be resisted

Objects of the congress

effectually, the Sicilian Greeks must consent to give up their senseless and incessant quarrelling. This necessity of making common cause against Athens was first felt by the citizens of Kamarina and Gela, and was first expressed probably by the men of the weaker city. The truce between these two cities was followed by a Congress at Gela, in which, before the envoys of the Sikeliots (or Sicilian Greeks) generally, Hermokrates stood forward for the first time as the uncompromising antagonist of Athens.

Address of Hermokrates

Aiming at the establishment of a single confederacy of all the Sicilian Greeks, he passed lightly over the aggressive and ambitious temper which had characterised their more powerful cities, and made the least of the centrifugal impulse which tended to sever Dorians from Ionians into opposing bodies. For the present it was to his interest to urge that such distinctions, never profitable or even reasonable, were now especially pernicious, when a struggle was in all likelihood impending with a power which never hesitated to enslave a people because they might chance to be Ionians. For such considerations the Athenians, he said, cared nothing. The independence of their allies was radically inconsistent with their theory of empire, and if the Sikeliot Ionians wished to avoid slavery, they could do so only by laying aside their private differences with the Sikeliot Dorians, and by submitting all disputes to arbitration.

Misrepresentations involved in his arguments

That the Syracusans were animated by this just and forgiving disposition he was, of course, compelled to maintain. Facts were, indeed, somewhat against him; but he was drawing still nearer to the borders of fiction when he represented the readiness of the Athenians to aid the Chalkidian cities as out of all proportion to the entreaties made to them for help. His argument would have lost all force had he reminded his hearers that the beginning of the great struggle between Athens and Sparta was seized by the Sikeliot Dorians as a convenient time for making an attack upon their Ionian neighbours,

and that it was only the consciousness of a danger menacing Dorians and Ionians alike, which had induced the natural rulers in Hellas to make common cause with those who should rightfully be their subjects.

If Hermokrates spoke as Thucydides represents him to have spoken (and there is no reason for questioning the substantial correctness of his report), this would have been the truer commentary on the recent history of the island; and although Hermokrates may have been more truthful than Brasidas, we cannot forget that a Dorian could not understand, and therefore could not describe fairly, the real relations of Athens with her allies, or take the measure in which the objects of her confederacy interfered with the independent action of its members.

Misconceptions as to the nature of the Athenian confederacy

The decision sought for by Hermokrates was attained, and it was agreed that a general peace should be made between the several cities, which should retain each its present possessions. The Athenian commanders were at once informed of the treaty, to which, it was added, they might, if they pleased, become a party. For the time being they had scarcely an option; and the Athenian fleet was accordingly withdrawn.

General peace in Sicily

The pacification brought about by the efforts of Hermokrates was short-lived. It was, indeed, not likely to last longer than the general fear of Athenian ambition; and the disasters of the Boiotian campaign, crowned by the catastrophe of Delion, speedily dispelled this fear. But in spite of all the fair words of the Syracusan envoy, some at least of the weaker towns could not rid themselves of the suspicion that in the city which Hermokrates represented they had a neighbour more dangerous than Athens. It was this distrust and fear of Syracuse which turned the eyes of the Egestaians, among many others, towards Athens; but the men of Egesta occupied a peculiar position, in so far as they appealed, not so much to the compassion of the Athenians, as to their

Negotiations between Egesta and Athens, B.C. 416

sense of expediency. They asserted that, though they were well aware of their inability to stand by themselves, their power, if combined with that of Athens, was not to be despised; and they pledged themselves, not merely to bring their own men into the field, but to take on themselves the whole cost of the war.

This fatal bait caught the Athenians, who committed themselves to the enterprise thus suggested. The preparations for the expedition were on so huge a scale that secrecy or mystification in reference to it became impossible. Tidings of the storm which was coming upon them reached Syracuse as well as Sparta; but in the former city they were received with a stubborn incredulity against which Hermokrates in vain raised his voice. Ten years before, at the Synod of Gela, he had striven earnestly to form a confederacy of all the Sicilian Greeks, whether Dorians or Ionians, as a check on the boundless aggressiveness of Athens. Now he came forward in the public assembly at Syracuse to tell his countrymen that the danger which he had feared was no longer distant. The Athenians, having taken up the absurd quarrel of the Egestaians, were already on their way upon the errand of conquest. There was little time for deliberation; but if there was need of energetic action, there was no cause for fear. The very magnitude of the armament brought against them would constrain all the Sikeliots to make common cause with Syracuse, with the result to the invaders of either defeat or ruin. All history taught the same lesson. Schemes for distant conquest were rarely successful; and the brightest page in Athenian annals was the humiliation of Xerxes with forces vastly larger than any which Athens could bring against Sicily. Nothing more, then, was needed than timely caution. The Syracusans must not only be ready for the struggle themselves; they must rouse all the Hellenes of Sicily and Italy to common action in a time of common jeopardy. They must ask the aid even of Carthage, and must further insist

Hermokrates announces the approach of the Athenian armament, B.C. 415

on the invasion of Attica by the armies of Sparta and Corinth.

The position of Hermokrates as an oligarchical leader could scarcely fail to impart a political complexion to his censures on the character of the Syracusan people; at least, it might be turned to a political account by speakers belonging to a different school. The arguments urged by Nikias (p. 210 *et seq.*) against any expedition to Sicily were so strong and so obvious, that we need feel no surprise if they suggested themselves to some among the citizens of Syracuse. These arguments Thucydides puts into the mouth of one Athenagoras, a name which suggests a comparison with that of Mnesiphilos (i. 161). Mnesiphilos exists only to remind his friend of his duty; Athenagoras exists only to speak for Athens, and the gist of his speech is to represent the Athenians as congratulating themselves on having escaped invasion by the Syracusans, rather than as themselves contemplating an invasion of Sicily.

Counter arguments of Athenagoras

Thucydides speaks of an angry debate as cut short by the authority of the generals. But the main point to be noted is that Hermokrates, the oligarchic leader, has, like the Spartans (p. 87), no hesitation in invoking the aid of barbarians against Greeks. The only determined resistance to Persian aggression comes from the democratic statesmen of Athens; and no sooner has Corinth stirred up the strife between the two leading states of Greece, than Sparta seeks to bring upon Ionian Hellas the arms of the Persian king. In the same spirit Hermokrates at Syracuse urges his countrymen to seek the alliance of an African city which was, and which remained, their natural enemy. So far as the theory of city autonomy, universally accepted by the Greeks, rendered it possible for her to do so, Athens, by her maritime power, welded her subjects into a nation. Sparta undid her work, and the result was that both fell prostrate, first before the Makedonian, and then before the centralising power of Rome.

Readiness of Hermokrates to ask for barbarian aid

As to the matter immediately in hand, Hermokrates was

right. The Athenians intended to come, and they came. Of the conduct of Hermokrates in the earliest stage of the struggle we have not much information; but we know enough to justify the opinion that it was as prompt and statesmanlike as that of Nikias was feeble and silly. He was clearly one of the commanders in the battle which Nikias failed to turn to good account, soon after the landing of the Athenians on the shore of the inlet of Daskon (p. 217). This Syracusan reverse he described as nothing more than an insignificant check, undergone at the hands of the most experienced troops in Hellas. But he insisted that, although better discipline for the future would soon make up for past want of skill, they were suffering from another evil, with which they must deal at once. The large number of fifteen Strategoi or generals would do more harm than good; three would amply suffice, if invested with adequate powers. His advice was taken, and he was himself appointed one of the three.

Hermokrates as a military leader

With great energy the new generals set about the works needed to foil the operations of the besiegers. But to counteract still more the feeble efforts of Nikias, the Syracusans sent to Kamarina envoys, who were introduced to the assembly along with the representatives of Athens. On the part of the Syracusans, Hermokrates asked for their active co-operation on the ground of the restless and aggressive temper and habits of the Athenians. Their plea of aiding the Egestaians was a mere pretence; and the fall of Syracuse, if that event should occur, would show them in their true light, as wolves ravening after sheep whom they had taken care to keep jealous and suspicious of each other. These fears, as the Athenian Euphemos showed, were groundless; but, unwilling or afraid to take part openly with either side, the Kamarinaians remained neutral.

Hermokrates at Kamarina

The battle which inflicted on the Athenians a fatal disaster in the death of Lamachos (p. 223) was followed by a time of unpopularity and disgrace for Hermokrates. Nikias was,

undoubtedly, making the least use that he well could of his position (p. 220); but even thus the prospect was for the Syracusans most discouraging. They were, in fact, beginning to feel the miseries of a state of siege; and their irritation was vented first upon their generals, whom they suspected either of gross neglect of duty or of wilful treachery. Hermokrates and his colleagues were deprived of their command. During the rest of the siege the supreme military leader was the Spartan Gylippos, whose efforts, we may safely say, were zealously seconded by Hermokrates, although the latter was now only a private citizen.

Hermokrates deprived of his command, B.C. 414

Never failing to watch for opportunities which might be turned to the benefit of the Syracusans, he availed himself of that most momentous of all opportunities, which he thought that the sluggishness of Nikias might be depended on to afford to him, after the destruction of the Athenian fleet in the great harbour (p. 241). Feeling sure that Demosthenes at least would urge the removal of the army without an hour's delay, Hermokrates put forth all his strength in trying to persuade the generals to send out instantly a force which might break up and guard the roads on the probable line of march. Their answer was, that for the present their power was not equal to their will. A great sacrifice was to be offered up to Herakles, and the whole city was so given up to a frenzy of wild delight, that the carrying out of the scheme proposed by Hermokrates was simply impossible.

Conduct of Hermokrates on the ruin of the Athenian fleet

Foiled here, Hermokrates resolved to try the effect of a stratagem not unlike that by which Nikias had drawn away the Syracusans to Katanê. He dispatched some horsemen who, professing to come from the Athenian party within the city, informed the Athenian generals that the roads were already blocked, and that, therefore, they would do well to defer retreat until daylight. The success of his trick probably far exceeded his hopes. It led to the destruction of the whole Athenian army; and

Trick to delay the retreat of the Athenians

in a few days the Athenian generals were brought into Syracuse as prisoners.

From Thucydides we learn nothing on this subject; but if we may trust the traditions reported by Diodoros and Plutarch, Hermokrates did all that he could to save the lives of Nikias and Demosthenes, and, when he found that his efforts were vain, urged them to escape execution by a voluntary death. There is little to interest us in the incident. Hermokrates was well aware that by the slaughter of Demosthenes a distinct compact made with that commander was deliberately broken (p. 199); and Gylippos was more than mortified that he could not retain Nikias to grace the triumphant procession which should welcome him on his return to Sparta.

Alleged efforts of Hermokrates to save the lives of Nikias and Demosthenes

When Hermokrates again comes before us, the scene of the great Dorian and Ionian struggle has shifted from west to east. The terrible Sicilian catastrophe had shaken the Athenian empire to its foundations. It had also done irreparable mischief to the Athenian constitution. It had put an end to the orderly growth of the state, and given an impulse to the arbitrary activity of political factions. It had stirred some of the Athenian allies to revolt in the interests of oligarchy; it had excited in others a revolt of the demos against the oligarchs.

Effects of the catastrophe in Sicily

But the task of putting Athens down altogether was found to be a harder one than her enemies had anticipated. The Athenian power was felt in Chios; and the dread of her vengeance lay heavy on the oligarchic faction in Miletos (B.C. 412). Her forces had encamped on Milesian ground before the Milesians, aided by the Peloponnesians under the Spartan Chalkideus, and by a body of Persian cavalry under the satrap Tissaphernes, came out to encounter them. The Dorian Argives advanced with contemptuous carelessness against the Ionians of Miletos; but their disorder was punished by a defeat which cost them three hundred men, while the Ionians of

Transference of the war to Asia

Athens were not less decisively victorious over the Dorians of Sparta.

The astonishment caused by this strange result might have been especially useful to the Athenians in their intended investment of Miletos, had not tidings come that a fleet of more than fifty ships from Peloponnesos and Sicily might at any moment be looked for. Of these ships, twenty were from Syracuse; and Hermokrates, by whose urgent advice they had been sent, was himself in command of them.

Hermokrates sent in command of a Syracusan fleet, B.C. 412

That eager statesman was as earnestly bent on breaking up the maritime empire of Athens in the Egean as he had been on destroying her forces on the soil of his own city. But he came in for less glory and more trouble than he had looked for. The Peloponnesians had invoked the aid of the Persian king, and looked to him to pay the men whom they brought into the field. The Athenians were not crushed as soon as the Spartans supposed that they would be; and Tissaphernes, on the part of his master, announced that the pay of the men must be lessened by one half. The loudly expressed indignation of Hermokrates convinced the satrap of the wisdom of compromising the matter, and he agreed to furnish a rate of pay which should enable the crew of one ship in rotation to receive at the full rate, while the rest received the half.

Hermokrates and the satrap Tissaphernes

But Hermokrates found that he was being thwarted by an antagonist of another sort. The Athenian Alkibiades was doing his best to bring himself into favour with Tissaphernes—in other words, to sow dissensions between the satrap and his Peloponnesian allies. It was from him that the suggestion came for reducing the pay of the seamen; and it was from him that Tissaphernes received the suggestion to reconcile the Peloponnesian officers to the reduced rate by means of bribes. Too much stress can scarcely be laid upon the fact that the plan failed in one single instance only; and the one man who resisted was the Syracusan Hermokrates. Personal corruption has often been

Hermokrates and Alkibiades

alleged as the special vice of democracies; and in Athens it is supposed to have found a specially congenial soil. But its growth in that city is but dwarfish in comparison with the gigantic proportions which it reached in the pure Doric oligarchy of Sparta and the haughty nobility of her allies.

Defeat of Hermokrates at the battle of Kynossema, B.C. 411

Hermokrates still hoped that he might see the accomplishment of his great desire, the final humiliation or destruction of Athens. The fortunes of that city seemed to be crossed by some avenging fury, and the revolts of Eubœa and Byzantion, to say nothing of other disasters, filled the cup of her misery well-nigh to the brim. Her enemies might fairly have thought that her last hour was come when her fleet faced that of the Spartans off Kynossema, B.C. 411. The decay of Athenian power and science is strikingly proved by the mere choice of the scene of conflict. Pent up in the narrow waters of a strait nowhere two miles in width, they now proposed to fight with nearly eighty ships in a space which Phormion would have regarded as inadequate for the proper manœuvring of twenty; and the details of the battle are therefore much on a par with those which were natural to the early tactics of the Persian war. But they fought stoutly. Opposed to the Athenian Thrasylos, Hermokrates learnt that it was not always so easy to vanquish Athenian seamen as he had found it in the great harbour of his own city. The day was decided in favour of the Athenians, but they had lost fifteen vessels and were gainers only by six.

Polybios speaks of Hermokrates as present when the Athenian fleet was snared at Aigospotamos; but long before that event the career of Hermokrates had closed under sentence of exile. The feeling of irritation excited at Syracuse by the news of naval defeats undergone at the hands of the Athenians was carried to a point beyond endurance when tidings came that the Peloponnesians and their allies had been decisively worsted at Kyzikos, B.C. 410. They heard with astonishment

Banishment of Hermokrates after the battle of Kyzikos, B.C. 410

and rage that their ships had all been burnt by their own people to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy; and under the impulse of frantic passion a sentence of banishment was passed on Hermokrates and his colleagues.

Publication of the sentence by Hermokrates at Antandros, B.C. 409

The sentence was published at Antandros by the commanders themselves before their men, who protested at first that they would never serve under any others. But Hermokrates insisted on obedience to the law, beseeching the men to maintain the good conduct by which they had won an honourable name. Persuaded at last to retain office until their successors should arrive, they then parted from their troops, who declared that on their return to Syracuse they would get the sentence of banishment rescinded.

Hermokrates at Selinous

But while he urged on his men the duty of obeying the law, Hermokrates, it seems, had made up his mind to obtain by force, if need be, the removal of a sentence which he rightly regarded as unjust. A gift of money which he received from the satrap Pharnabazos was used in hiring mercenaries to be employed in the struggle, if there should be need of a struggle, with his opponents in Syracuse. With the force so levied he advanced to the gates of the city; but on being refused admission he was constrained to retire to Selinous, which now lay in ruins after its destruction by the Carthaginians. Here the multitudes who hastened to join him enabled him to muster a picked force of six thousand heavy-armed troops, with which he systematically ravaged and plundered the Carthaginian territory.

Hermokrates at Himera, B.C. 407

His success caused a strong reaction in his favour within the walls of Syracuse; and Hermokrates resolved to make another effort to bring about his restoration. He went first to Himera, where Hannibal had lately (B.C. 409) avenged the defeat and death of his grandfather Hamilkar at the hands of Gelon (i. 218). Here he gathered the bodies or bones of their Syracusan allies which had remained unburied, and, placing them on richly

decorated cars, sent them to Syracuse to receive the fitting funeral honours.

The deed called forth the enthusiastic eulogies of his friends, who besought the Syracusans to express their gratitude by rescinding the sentence which prevented Hermokrates from appearing among them. These efforts so far had effect that his great opponent Diokles was banished; but Hermokrates, nevertheless, was not recalled. In no long time his partisans expressed to him their opinion that another attempt might be made to introduce him into the city with a reasonable chance of success. At the head of a force of three thousand men he set out from Selinous; but he moved at a rate with which they could not keep up, and he had only a few attendants about him when he reached the gate of Achradina.

Hermokrates enters Achradina

Occupying this gate, he judged it most prudent to attempt nothing further until the main body of his troops should arrive. But the Syracusan generals, hearing what had happened, resolved to strike before they could come up. The contest was hopelessly unequal. The few who were with Hermokrates were overpowered, and Hermokrates himself was amongst the slain.

Death of Hermokrates

The reason assigned by Diodoros for the persistent opposition offered to the restoration of Hermokrates was the fear of what might follow it. All his acts since the resignation of his command in the Egean had betrayed his readiness or eagerness to effect his return to Syracuse by force, if this end could not be attained peaceably; and his opponents openly expressed their dread that, if he should again be elected general, he might use his power to make himself a tyrant (i. 41).

Reason assigned for this event by Diodoros

As it so happened, the death of Hermokrates was followed immediately by the rise of Dionysios, who repeated in Syracuse the work which Peisistratos achieved in Athens; and this fact may, perhaps, show that Hermokrates was not indisposed to indemnify himself after the same fashion for the wrongs which he had

Probable motives of Hermokrates

suffered at the hands of his political opponents. At the least, he could say that he had been wronged. He had miscalculated the powers of resistance possessed by Athens after the destruction of her armament in Sicily; but in no other way had he deserved the hard measure dealt out to him. The picture of political morality thus brought before us is sufficiently discouraging and gloomy; but the causes which led to the disgrace of Hermokrates were also those which arrayed Dorian and Ionian Greeks against each other in deadly strife, and rendered the growth of a Greek nation impossible.

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